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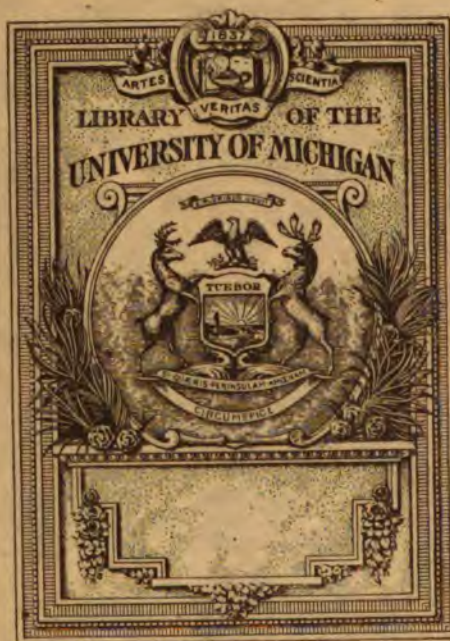
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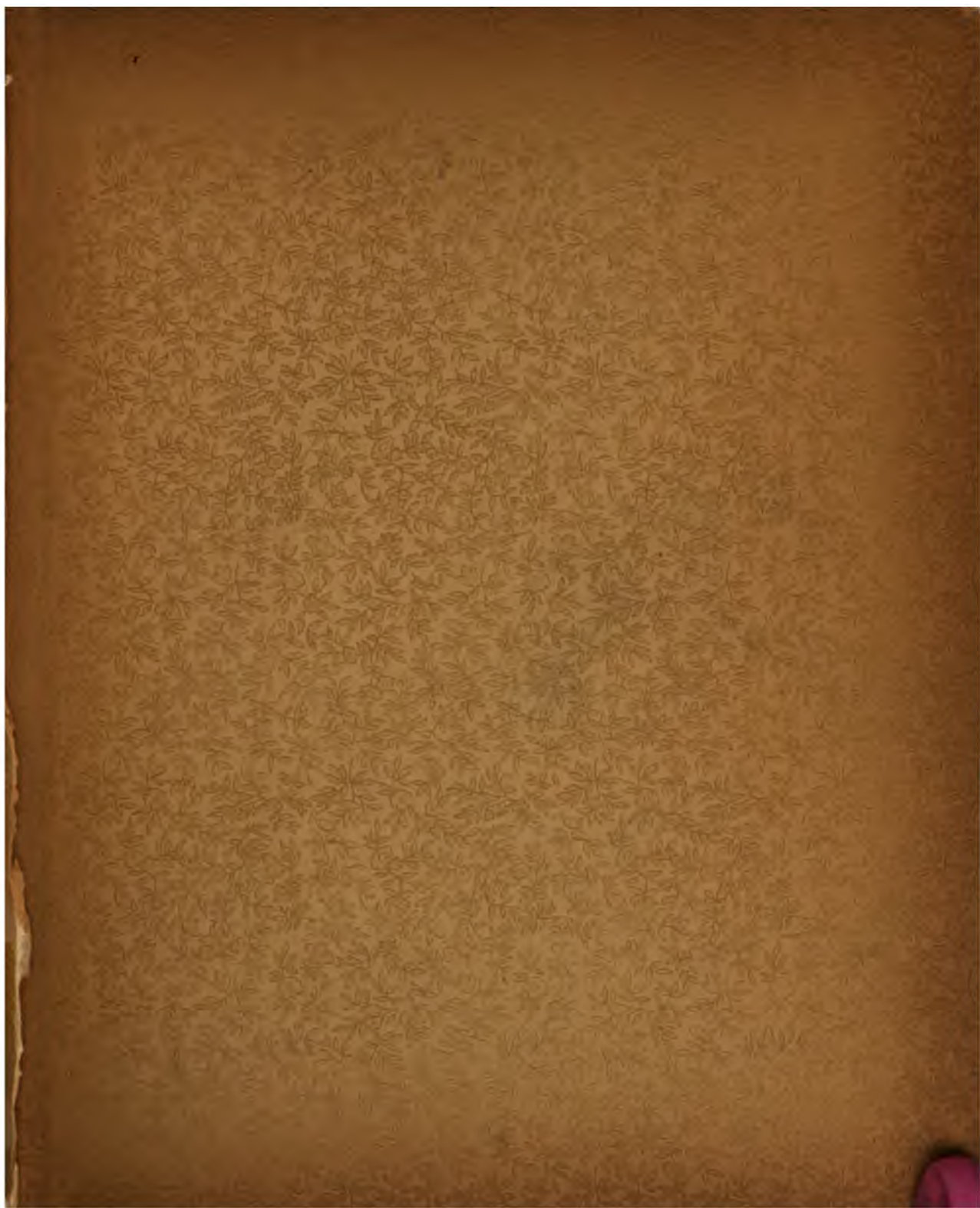
HUNTERS THREE

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SPORT AND ADVENTURE
IN
SOUTH AFRICA







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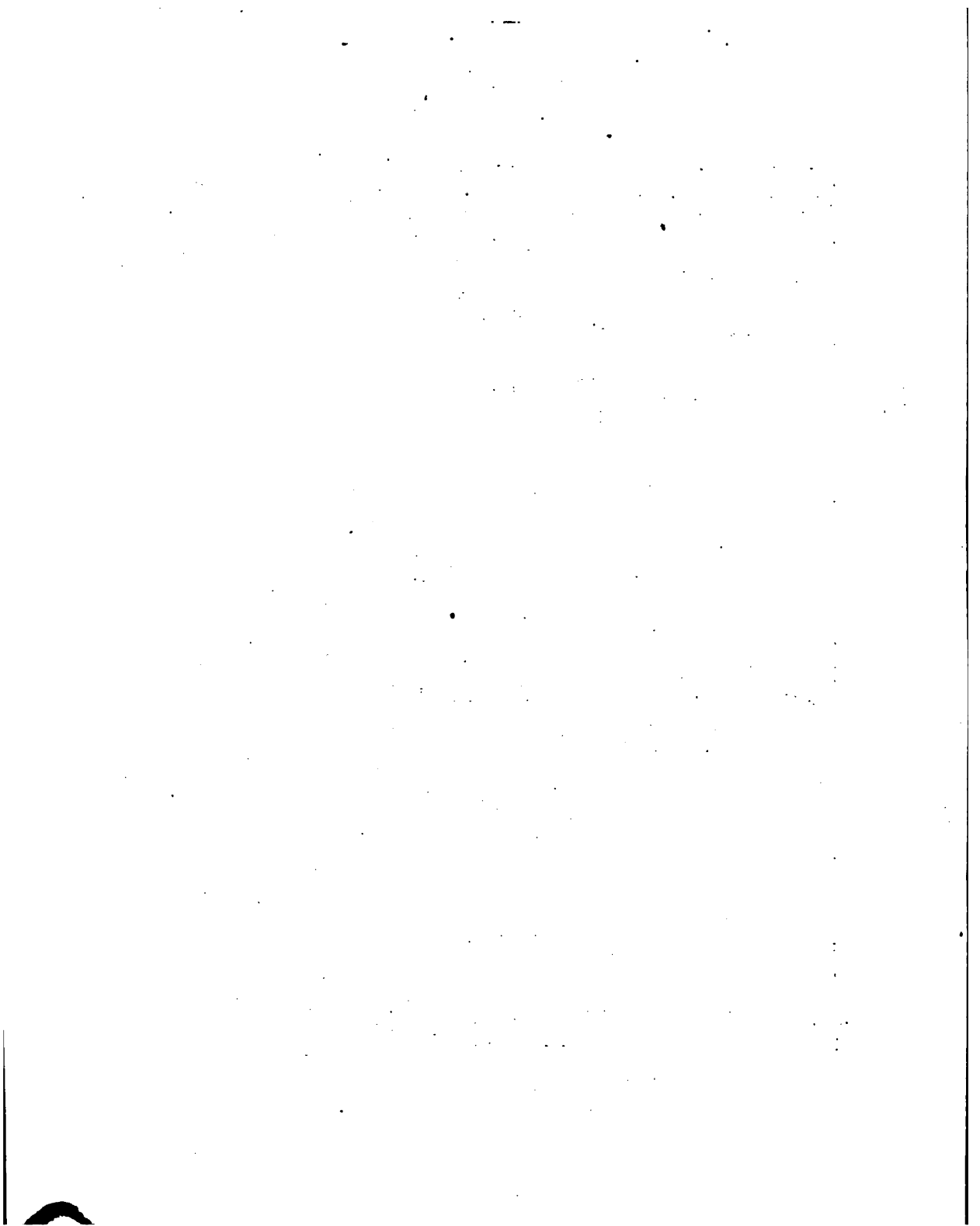
HE SAW ME AND CHARGED. Page 29. Frontispiece.

HUNTING

SPORT AND THE HUNT



NEW YORK
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HUNTERS THREE

SPORT AND ADVENTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY
THOMAS W. KNOX, 1875-1896
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY TRAVELLERS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM M. CARY



NEW YORK
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1895



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INTRODUCTION.

FOR the last fifty years or more South Africa has been an attractive field for the hunter in search of large game. Along in the middle of the century it was the paradise of the sportsman, as the readers of hunting-stories of that time can well understand; as time has gone on the game has steadily diminished, and the hunter of to-day makes but a poor record in comparison with Cumming, Andersson, and other men of the early times. But even at present South Africa is not without attractions for the hunter, though he can never hope for successes like those which have been mentioned.

The customary methods of hunting in South Africa were, and still are, for the hunter to outfit in one of the principal towns along the coast or in the interior, equipping himself with wagons, oxen, and horses, and hiring the necessary number of people to accompany him in a journey up-country. The lading of the wagons consists of provisions and ammunition for the hunter's use, together with various kinds of goods to be used as presents or for trading-purposes among the natives. As fast as the provisions are consumed and the goods are used up, the wagons are loaded

with the ivory of elephants and the skins of other beasts, such as can be sold in the outfitting market. The party will be absent from the point of outfitting all the way from four months to a year or more, depending upon the luck of the hunter in the slaughter of game, and also upon the preservation of his oxen and horses. Not infrequently he meets with disaster, his animals dying in the wilderness and leaving him without motive power for his wagons. In such an event he must act according to his judgment; sometimes he may leave his property in the care of a friendly chief, but if no such personage can be found he must destroy the fruits of his expedition. It is a rule all through Africa never to abandon goods and allow them to fall into the hands of the natives. If goods must be left behind, the true African traveler always sets fire to them, or in some other way renders them worthless.

Down to quite recently it was the custom for hunting-parties of from two to five or six men to club together, buy an outfit, and go up-country on a hunting-expedition. If they are fairly successful the sale of the ivory and skins obtained on the expedition will cover all the expenses of it, and frequently leave a liberal profit to be divided at the end of the tour. It was an expedition of this sort which brought together the heroes of our story, "Hunters Three," and we will leave the reader to ascertain by perusal of the narrative the various adventures through which these young men passed.

And it was a similar expedition, though made with less expectation of profit, that went out from Walvisch Bay to give two British women a chance at the big game of South

Africa. Somehow the steps of these two expeditions trended in the same direction, and led to their meeting as detailed in the opening chapters of the narrative. That somebody should fall in love with somebody else as a result of the meeting was naturally to be expected. Love exists in South Africa quite as much as in more civilized lands, and love-making can be pursued in the haunts of the elephant and buffalo just as readily as in the gilded parlors of fashionable life. In justification of this assertion this narrative of sport and love in South Africa is submitted to the reader for his instruction and amusement.

T. W. K.

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HUNTERS THREE.

CHAPTER I.

BREAKFAST INTERRUPTED—CHASING A BIG TUSKER.

WE were just going inside the tent, Harry, Jack, and I, to eat our frugal breakfast, when we saw one of our natives coming at a rapid run. He waved his hand as he approached, and shouted:

“Tembo, Bwana!”

Rendered into English, this means, “Elephants, master!” and the announcement of elephants put the thought of breakfast out of our heads.

The man came to a halt in front of us, and explained, in a mixture of English, Cape Dutch, and two or three native languages, that he had discovered a troop of elephants a little more than a mile from our camp. There were ten or twelve of them, he thought, and among them were at least three or four large tuskers.

“All right,” said I. “Let’s go to breakfast, boys, and then go after the elephants. They’ll keep, and the breakfast won’t, nor will we keep, either, without it.”

So we went to the tent and speedily made way with what the cook had prepared. It was a modest repast, consisting of coffee, with plenty of sugar and no milk, and some steaks of hartbeest broiled over the coals of a thorn-bush fire. For bread we had what the English colonist calls damper—dough made of flour and water, and baked in a Dutch oven. Very good bread can be made in this way, but not by the ordinary Hottentot cook, such as one engages for an African hunting-expedition.

We disposed of our breakfast with a rapidity that would have done honor to a railway-station where the train halts ten minutes for refreshments. In considerably less than ten minutes we had finished breakfast and were getting our rifles ready for business.

We took our heaviest rifles, as the game was of a kind to require a liberal amount of lead to bring it down. My elephant-gun carried six bullets to the pound; it was a breech-loader of the Remington pattern, and of a weight proportioned to its caliber. A trusty negro boy carried it for me, and his instructions were to keep close at my heels wherever I went, whenever we were out on a hunting-expedition.

Jack and Harry had a similar equipment, except that their rifles carried eight bullets to the pound, and consequently had a little less penetrating power than my own. Each of us had a supply of explosive bullets, in addition to the solid ones, and in the course of this narrative the reader will learn how these explosive bullets were used.

When a party goes out on a hunting-expedition there is always a risk that somebody will shoot somebody else; elephant and buffalo hunting is nearly always conducted among

trees or bushes, very rarely in open ground, and where parties are within gunshot of one another it is impossible always to avoid accidents, even with the greatest care. For this reason it was our custom to scatter about a good deal, first ascertaining the position of the game, and the direction in which it would be likely to run when disturbed.

Mirogo, my native tracker, who had discovered the troop of elephants, said they were in a little piece of forest adjoining a swamp on the banks of the Luranga River. As he described the forest we made out that it was not more than forty or fifty acres in extent, while the swamp was much larger. After some discussion it was arranged that Harry should make a circuitous course to the farther side of the forest, Jack was to remain on the hither side, while Frank (that is my name) would penetrate the wooded ground and literally stir up the animals, getting the most effective shot that he could while so doing.

It was necessary to be very careful about giving the elephants our wind; if they once got scent of us they would be off in a hurry. Fortune favored us in this respect, as the wind blew directly across the forest toward the point where we reached it. Consequently the animals were not likely to scent us, provided neither Harry nor Jack proceeded too far along their respective sides of the lair of the elephants.

I sat down and waited while Harry and Jack were reaching their positions, and during my waiting spell I listened intently for a sound of the animals. Now and then the breeze brought to my ears the crashing of the limbs and trees, and the low trumpeting of the elephants as they called to one another while taking their morning feed. It

was evident they had not been alarmed and were totally unaware of the danger that threatened them.

When I had allowed a sufficient time, as I thought, for my friends to reach their stations, I proceeded cautiously into the forest, preceded by Mirogo, the tracker, and closely followed by Kalil, my gun-bearer.

We advanced in the direction of the sound of the crashing of limbs, keeping carefully up the wind; and when within two or three hundred yards, as nearly as I could judge, of the elephants, I took possession of my gun and cartridge-belt, and told Kalil to stand by with more cartridges ready to give me in case I needed them.

The ground was difficult to march over, as it was covered with creeping vines that every moment threatened to trip me up, and would most certainly do so in case I were trying to run from an enraged elephant. The elephant can crash through these creepers and undergrowth with the greatest ease; at all events, they do not seem to impede him in the least when he is pursuing the man who has fired at him and failed to bring him down. Should the man fall under such circumstances his life is not worth the value of a pin; he is trampled out of all semblance to humanity, and sometimes the infuriated beast will stand over him for an hour or more, long after life is extinct, trumpeting and bellying, and renewing his assaults upon the shapeless remains of his adversary.

Lest the reader might suppose that this statement is a flight of fancy let me tell what happened to my friend M—, only a few months before the time of which I am writing. M— and I were hunting on one of the tributaries of the

Zambesi, and had bagged a goodly quantity of large game. I was one ahead of M—— on the score of elephants, and the time was approaching for us to break camp and return to the Boer country, whence we had started on our expedition.

One morning two elephants were reported not very far from our camp, and I suggested to M—— that he had better go out and shoot one in order to bring his account even with mine, and I added, jocularly, "If you can shoot them both I'll divide with you and keep our scores just equal. I don't want you to beat me and be able to boast about it after we get back to civilization."

"Oh, I'll take care of both of them," M—— answered, "and bring in a buffalo or two in addition."

Off he started with his tracker and gun-bearer, while I went out on the plain to the south of us, in the hope of bagging a koodoo or a gemsbok. I was gone until noon, or a little later.

When I came back to camp there was no one there but the cook, and two of the men, who were guarding the oxen. The cook told me that something terrible had happened to Mr. M——, and the rest of the men had gone out to where he had been hunting elephants.

I followed immediately, and found that poor M—— had shot at an elephant, but did not succeed in hitting him vitally. The animal fell to the ground, but was up again in a moment, so the tracker said. He wheeled about with wonderful quickness, considering his size and apparent awkwardness, and made straight for his assailant. M—— started to run and reach the shelter of the nearest tree; his foot caught in a creeping vine, and he fell prostrate. In a mo-

ment the elephant was upon him, pounding the unfortunate man with his trunk, trampling him underfoot, and impaling him with his tusks. The tracker watched him from the nearest shelter, but could do nothing. The elephant remained by the side of his victim for at least half an hour, when, hearing a trumpet-call from his companion, he moved away into the forest.

We brought M——'s body to the camp, and buried it with all the ceremony which our situation permitted. I at once gave orders for inspanning the oxen and starting on our homeward journey, and a sad journey it was, you may well believe.

But I am wandering from the thread of my story. I took the gun from the hands of Kalil, and crept cautiously along in the direction of the elephants. I must have been sixty yards away when I spied the back of one rising among the bushes; an enormous back it was, fully nine feet from the ground, but it was no use shooting at that part of the animal, and I withheld my fire. There are only a few places where you can hit an elephant and kill him at the first shot: one is directly in the center of the forehead, where the skull is a little thinner than elsewhere; another is between the eye and ear; and the third is in the vicinity of the heart, just back of the foreshoulder. If you hit him anywhere else he may travel some time carrying your lead, even though the body is penetrated from side to side; and if you hit him on the skull or any other bony place where your bullet glances off, the principal result of your shot is to enrage him. Mindful of all this, I watched and waited for a suitable chance, and in a little while I had it.

The elephant fed slowly along, and, fortunately for me, though not for him, he fed in my direction. He broke through the clump of bushes where he was feeding, and gave me a full view of his head, broadside on. I took aim between his eye and ear, and I took careful aim, you may be sure. Then I fired, and heard plainly the thud of the bullet as it reached its mark.

The smoke hung about me, and for half a minute or so I could not see in any direction. That is a nuisance in shooting in an African forest, and especially in a swampy one. The air is so damp that the smoke does not quickly clear away, and the hunter is often left in doubt at a very critical moment.

And it was a critical moment in this case: the elephant fell to the ground as the result of my shot, and I felt that my prize was secure; but as the smoke cleared away he rose to his feet again, and charged directly toward where I stood. I do not think I was over fifty yards from him when I fired, and therefore he had but a short distance to come. He ran and I ran; but in the meantime I had got a fresh cartridge from my belt and shoved it into the gun. I kept my eye on a large tree a little to the right of my position, and made for that tree with the greatest speed of which I was capable, taking care to avoid catching my feet in any of the creeping vines. A man can easily dodge an elephant around a large tree; the animal is so bulky and unwieldy that he cannot turn and twist as rapidly as a man can, and in this respect the biped has the advantage over the quadruped.

I was almost paralyzed with astonishment—of course I will not say fear—when I saw the bulk of the creature I had

shot at, and his immense tusks. I knew it was a case of life and death, and he was not likely to give up his pursuit of me in a hurry. At the same time I felt that I had planted the bullet in an effective spot, and could not altogether understand why he was up again after having fallen. But there was no chance for theorizing; he was up, certainly, and after me, and that is all there was about it.

Round and round the tree we went, perhaps half a dozen times. He had his mouth open and trunk uplifted, and I watched for a chance to give him another shot. Shooting was difficult under the circumstances; a man on a dead run around a tree is unable to aim a gun with any accuracy, and, furthermore, there are not many vulnerable points about an elephant, as I have already shown. The only thing I could do was to fire into his mouth, but that was not likely to do any good.

The French have a saying that it is the unexpected which always happens; so it was with me and the elephant.

Suddenly there came the sound of the trumpet-call of another elephant. My pursuer stopped an instant to listen, turning his head to one side. As he did so I gave him another bullet, directly in the spot where I sent the first one. He quivered, staggered for a moment, and fell, dead!



ROUND AND ROUND THE TREE WE WENT. Page 8.

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CHAPTER II.

SURPRISED—A WOMAN HUNTING ELEPHANTS—JACK'S HIPPO- POTAMUS.

FOLLOWING my shot, with an interval of not more than two seconds, came the sound of another rifle, three or four hundred yards away. Then several elephants—I cannot say whether there were two or three, or twice that number—crashed away through the forest in different directions, and simultaneously with the crashing I heard the sound of other shots in the same direction as the first one.

“Surely Harry and Jack can’t have turned back and got here as quickly as this!” I said to myself. “That must be some other hunter; but I don’t know of any one in this neighborhood.”

I shouted and blew my whistle, but received no audible response, except the firing of a rifle, which seemed to be discharged directly toward the sky. Then I went in the direction of the shot, occasionally blowing my whistle to indicate my whereabouts. Of course Mirogo and Kalil accompanied me.

When we had gone about three hundred yards we met a native tracker who was unknown to me, and also to both my servants. He had a few words with Mirogo, and it was

evident that they understood each other. Mirogo turned to me and said there was another hunter who had shot an elephant, and was back in the forest a short distance.

"Very well," I said to Mirogo; "show me where he is and I'll make his acquaintance."

"He isn't a man," said Mirogo; "he's a woman!"

"What!" I exclaimed, "a woman hunting elephants?"

"That's what his tracker say," replied Mirogo; "his tracker say he's woman."

Well, here was romance with a vengeance: a woman shooting elephants in Africa, and we three men had not heard of her presence in the neighborhood! All the more reason why I should become acquainted with our rival. We certainly did not want to be in each other's way, and, moreover, if she was from any civilized land it would be a satisfaction to see and talk with her. The female society that one encounters in an African hunting-expedition is not usually of a kind to be enamoured of, as it consists almost entirely of native negroes, whose accomplishments in literature and the arts are not very marked. Furthermore, their style of beauty and habits of life do not render them at all attractive.

It did not occur to me that however much I might desire to make the acquaintance of this amazon she might not care for mine; but that is a good deal like a man, anyhow. The majority of the male sex always seem to think that their society is in demand, and you cannot make them understand that their room is sometimes better than their company.

So I followed Mirogo, who was following the strange tracker, and in a very few minutes I stood with my hat off

in presence of the fair one, the sound of whose rifle had attracted my attention.

I bowed and smiled, and apologized for the intrusion, adding that I was quite unaware that any party but my own was in that region. "Don't understand me as objecting to your presence," I added, "as there is abundance of game for ten times the number of hunters that are likely to assemble in this neighborhood."

"Quite natural," said the stranger, "that you were not aware of our being in this vicinity, as we only arrived here last evening. We heard of a party of hunters who had come in from the southeast; we came in here from the southwest, from Walvisch Bay, and only encamped at sunset yesterday. This morning I heard of elephants in this forest, and came out in the hope of shooting one."

"And evidently you have succeeded," I replied, pointing in the direction of the fallen beast that lay a short distance away. "Allow me to extend my congratulations."

She accepted the compliment, and said it was not her first elephant by any means. "We have been out several weeks," she continued, "and have been hunting whenever the opportunity offered."

"One does not carry a card-case in his pocket on an elephant-hunt," I remarked, "so please allow me to introduce myself verbally. I am Frank Manson, at your service, and belong to a hunting-party that came out from Durban and has been working up in this direction. We are encamped about two miles east of here."

The fair huntress bowed slightly in acknowledgment, and then said: "I am Miss Boland, and am with my friend,

Mrs. Roberts. We are both English, and are independent enough to travel by ourselves. The only men in our party are the native assistants, the fore-looper, after-rider, and manager; the latter is a Dutchman who has general charge of the wagons and outfit, subject to our orders."

I thanked her for the information, and asked if I or my friends could be of any assistance to her. It is so like a man to think that a woman always wants assistance that the suggestion came from me as naturally as does the phrase "Good-morning" whenever I meet a friend at the beginning of the day.

She smiled, saying as she did so, with an air of independence:

"Thank you, sir, but I do not know that we need any assistance whatever; you are very kind to tender it, but really we manage to get along very comfortably. Should I think of anything in which you can aid us I will not hesitate to send word to your camp. Do you remain long in this neighborhood?"

"As to that I cannot say positively," I replied; "we have formed no very definite plans. Shall stay where we are as long as the hunting is good, and when it falls off we'll go elsewhere. I presume that is very much the case with yourselves?"

"Yes," she replied; "we stay in a place as long as we like it, and then move on."

With that she bowed, as if to intimate that I had better be moving on in my own direction. I took the hint and bade her good-day, with the suggestion that I had been greatly pleased at meeting her; and she amiably returned the

suggestion almost word for word. I went back in the direction of my fallen elephant, and she turned the other way in the forest.

The reader will naturally want to know how this amazon of the African woods was dressed.

Her costume was decidedly mannish, and less unlike mine than might at first be supposed. She wore loose, baggy trousers that were thrust into hunting-boots, thus enabling her to get around the forest far easier than if she had been encumbered with any kind of skirts, even short ones. The upper part of her figure was clad in a tunic that was buttoned from the neck down the whole length of the front, and terminated just at the knee, not below it. The tunic was evidently made for hunting-purposes, as it abounded in pockets and had a cartridge-case firmly sewed to it. On her head she wore a *sola topee*, or sun-helmet, and in general her dress was not at all unlike that of a man. While we were conversing she stood behind a fallen log, so that I could not take in the entire outline of her figure. Her manner was pleasing enough, and altogether I felt myself a little touched in the region of the heart. Her independence had piqued me somewhat, and I felt that I wanted to see her again, but exactly how to go about it I did not know. She had not invited me to visit their camp or indicated the slightest desire that any one of our party should come near her or her friend. While she had not said they wished to be left alone, she certainly did not say that she wanted any of our company.

I got back to where my fallen elephant lay, and then sent Mirogo to camp to bring men and an ax for cutting out the

animal's tusks. I told him to be particular and not make any mistake, as the men might stumble on the carcass of the elephant which Miss Boland had killed. I remarked that it would be very discourteous to take the tusks of her elephant instead of ours, and, furthermore, that ours were much larger than hers.

Then, accompanied by Kalil, I made my way back to camp, reaching there an hour or more before Harry and Jack returned from their unprofitable wait at the edge of the forest. We took lunch, and then went down the river to shoot hippopotami. We met with fairly good luck, as we killed three or four of the big brutes, though we secured only one, the others sinking out of our reach in the river. It is proper to say that I had no actual part in the affair, as I turned away before reaching the river to stalk a gemsbok.

"We made a good-sized raft of reeds," said Harry—"one that would hold both of us and a couple of men to paddle the craft. In this raft we floated out into the river and down a half-mile or so, where it expands into a narrow lake. When we started we couldn't see a hippo, not one, as they'd all taken the alarm at the noise we made building and launching the raft. By the time we got down to the broad portion of the river we were beyond the point of disturbance, and then we saw their snouts sticking out of the water in various directions. The proper thing to do is to shoot the hippo in shallow water, and then throw a harpoon into him just as quickly as you can. If you can manage to kill him instantly with your first shot, and the water is not too deep, you can get him and drag him ashore; but unless your first shot is instantly fatal he gets away.

"And that was the case with us," Harry continued; "there was only one that we got fine work into, and that we did with an explosive bullet. Jack was the lucky fellow. He put the bullet straight into the hippo's ear, and that, you know, is the best shot to make. It didn't explode until it got well into his head, and I don't believe there was ever a more astonished creature in the river than that beast was when the explosion came. He went to the bottom like a shot; that is, he went down about four feet. We had a harpoon along, one of the regular style that the natives hunt with, and we prodded that into the fellow just as soon as we could. Then we paddled the raft off to the shore, and dragged him along by means of the harpoon-line."

"And you've got him all right, have you?" I said.

"Oh yes," replied Harry, "he's secure; but the others are at the bottom of the river. The men will be along in a little while with the skin of the beast, and we'll have all the jambok we want in the camp."

I should explain that the jambok is a whip made of hippopotamus-hide, just like the koorbash in Egypt. It is the most cruel whip ever made; the nearest approach to it known in the civilized world is the green hide, or rawhide, such as was formerly used in the Southern States in the days of slavery, and occasionally by New England school-masters of the olden time on very unruly pupils.

Our native attendants had a royal feast off the flesh of the hippopotamus, and we came in for a share of it, or as much as we wanted. Hippo is very good eating when you cannot get anything better; it has a strong, rather musky flavor which I do not like, and I find that most other white

men have tastes similar to mine in this respect. But a Kafir, or any other black-skinned native of Africa, is not at all particular, and you might empty a bottleful of musk over his dinner without interfering with his appetite.

I did not say a word to Harry and Jack until dinner about the hunter I met in the forest. I told them briefly about my elephant-hunt, but we all were too busy for anything else until we got seated at the table; fact is, we were pretty busy then, as all were hungry, but there are intervals at table when even a very hungry man can put in a few words now and then between the mouthfuls.

"By the way, fellows, I didn't tell you about the new hunting-party here, did I?" I remarked, soon after we had taken our seats.

"No!" said both the others, in a breath; "who are they?"

"I don't know their whole pedigree," I replied. "I have only seen one of them."

"Well, what can you tell us about him?" said Harry. "Who is he? Where is he from? What kind of an outfit has he?"

"There are several questions all in one," I answered, "and some of them I haven't yet learned about. In the first place, it isn't a 'him' at all; it's a 'her'!"

CHAPTER 'III.

A QUESTION OF ETIQUETTE—THE FAIR HUNTER DISCUSSED— LIONS VISIT US AT NIGHT.

"WHAT!" exclaimed Harry and Jack simultaneously.

"Yes, it's a woman, and she shot an elephant this afternoon."

Another exclamation of astonishment followed my assertion, and then Harry asked:

"Who is she?"

"Her name is Miss Boland," I answered; "at least that's what she told me, and she said her companion was Mrs. Roberts. They came from Walvisch Bay, and that's pretty much all I know about them."

Then I explained the circumstances under which we met, and detailed the conversation, word for word, as nearly as I could remember it.

The information almost broke up the dinner of my companions. That a woman, or two women, should take to hunting big game in South Africa was enough to take away any man's breath, and with his breath gone there was not much chance for him to need an appetite. Both of them stopped eating long enough to allow me to take the choicest cuts of the hippopotamus, and if I had managed the affair shrewdly, and maintained a good deal of mystery about the

matter, I think I might have stolen the entire dinner. But when I said that was all I knew about it, their appetites returned, and they fell to eating again with their accustomed vigor.

"We must go and call on them to-morrow morning," said Harry. "Pity we haven't a barber and a tailor and a fashionable bootmaker here on the borders of the Luranga River."

"Oh, nonsense," said Jack. "What business have we to go calling on them? We've never been introduced." Then, turning to me, Jack inquired if the fair one I met had requested a visit from me or my friends.

I told him what the reader already knows, and then Jack remarked:

"That settles it; if those women want us they'll send for us, or if they want us and don't send for us they'll manage to hunt around in this direction and stumble upon our camp by the merest accident, first finding out exactly where it is, so that there won't be any mistake about their accident. My idea is, that we had better stick to our business; mind our own affairs, in fact, and let them politely alone. We may run across them hunting some day, and they'll be far more likely to respect us if we hold aloof than if we go running after them."

"Oh, that's all rubbish," said Harry; "we'll ride over to their camp; that is, we'll get within half a mile or so of it, and send along the most intelligent of our servants. He can go to their camp, and through their principal servant let the women know that it would give us pleasure to call on them if entirely agreeable."

"Yes," said Jack, "and thereby compel them to receive us, or appear rude in declining our call. We push ourselves forward and put them in an awkward position. We are just like the man whom you know, but don't care a straw about, who comes to you with a plausible yarn, with the object of borrowing five dollars. He forces you to do one of two things, either of which is disagreeable: part with your money—with a prospect of never seeing it again—or affront him by a refusal. I tell you flatly I will not go. Understand me, I would like to meet the ladies, for such I presume they are, but I don't want to force myself on their acquaintance."

Harry did not admit the force of Jack's argument, at least not audibly. Before committing himself he turned to me and asked my opinion. I coincided with Jack, but made a suggestion that it would do no harm for us to hunt in that direction, and possibly we might meet one or both the amazons in field or forest.

Harry and Jack assented to this view, and the discussion as to the propriety of calling upon the women was dropped.

"The one you saw must have been an accomplished huntress," Harry remarked, after a pause.

"Oh, call her a hunter," said Jack; "don't bother about that straining word 'huntress.' In sport, as in science, there's no distinction of sex. When women first began to study medicine one who obtained her degree was called 'doctress.' Now that nonsense is dropped, and she's called doctor, like any other medical practitioner. Hunting big game in South Africa is entitled to be called a science; anyhow, it requires a lot of science to succeed in it. She's a hunter just as much as you or I."

"All right," said Harry; "I won't dispute with you, especially because I think you are right; and I don't think Frank will, either."

I assented to the adoption of the term as Jack proposed, at which the latter remarked that we seemed to be settling a good many important questions over our hippopotamus-steak.

Then they asked me as to the appearance, dress, and manner of Miss Boland, and I answered them to the best of my ability. After our dinner was over we had our smoke, and soon after went to bed. Before we retired our wagon-master reported that lions were about the kraal the previous night, as he had heard them growling several times, and found their spoor close up to the fence. He thought we might have another visit that night, and wished to know if he should call us.

"By all means," I answered; "when you're entirely sure they're outside, let us know."

When we camped on that spot we made a kraal of thorn-bushes, which surrounded everything, including our tent and wagons. The cattle were driven into the kraal at night, and were carefully watched during the day by the men who had them in charge. We had about fifty oxen altogether, and five horses, and the horses were secured in the same way as the cattle. The kraal was built high and strong; it is necessary to make it high, otherwise the lions might attempt to jump it. On the outside of the kraal thorn-bushes were scattered all over the ground, at least ten or fifteen feet from the fence, the object being to prevent the lions approaching close to the kraal, where they could get a favorable opportunity for a jump.

We got our guns ready for work in case the lions showed themselves, and then turned in.

About one o'clock in the morning my Kafir came to wake me, and said the lions were outside the kraal. I was up on the instant, and so were Harry and Jack; fact is, we had not undressed at all, as we felt it reasonably certain that we would be called, and wanted to have as little delay as possible in getting at work.

At least one half of our people were out and about when we made our appearance. That there were lions around was evident by the actions of the horses and oxen. The horses were in a little kraal by themselves, each one tethered to a stake, and on a quiet night all would be lying down and at rest; now every horse was up, dancing around uneasily, and straining at his halter. My favorite, Brickdust—as I called him on account of his color—was snorting and stamping in a condition of excitement. When I spoke to him he quieted down instantly, but not altogether. He felt a good deal reassured by my presence, but at the same time believed himself in danger. It was the same with the other horses; and as for the oxen, they were likewise on the alert, and aware of the presence of their natural enemy.

The Kafirs were jabbering away at a great rate when we appeared. We enjoined silence, but it was not easy to quiet them; in fact, it was necessary to threaten them with the jambok before we succeeded in hushing their voices. When they were hushed we could distinctly hear the lions, now in one quarter, and now in another. They were evidently prowling around the outside of the kraal looking for a spot where they could penetrate to the interior.

Harry suggested that we go outside and find them; to this proposition I demurred most emphatically, and so did Jack. I presume Harry really did not intend to do anything so foolish, but made the suggestion out of bravado. It would have been folly for us to do what he suggested, as the lions would have seen us far easier than we could have seen them. They had come in search of food, and were, therefore, hungry. We should run a very good chance of becoming their victims instead of their becoming ours.

The Kafirs had erected their huts of grass and bushes inside the kraal, close up to the fence. I suggested that we climb to the top of these huts, which would give us a view over the fence; and my friends acted upon the suggestion. We scattered so that the three of us commanded three sides of the kraal with our weapons, and from this point of vantage we peered out as well as we could into the darkness.

There was a small moon, which was nearly set, so that we had not much light to help us. I was favored in my position by having the moon almost directly in front of me, while the ground outside the kraal sloped off gradually at that point. It was understood that we were to act independently of one another, and also not to waste our bullets. No one was to fire except when he felt certain that he saw a good mark to fire at.

The uneasiness of the oxen and horses continued; our dogs were also running around, and manifesting a desire to take part in whatever fighting was about to occur. Now and then they indicated their feelings by growling; they would have barked outright had they not been ordered most emphatically to emulate the example of the oyster and "shut up."

We had been ten or fifteen minutes on the top of the

huts when I made out the forms of three lions that were half walking and half crawling along the ridge betwixt me and the sky. They seemed to be a lion and two lionesses, or possibly an old lion with two younger ones. At any rate, I could make out a heavy mane on the foremost of the brutes, and little or none at all on the others.

I brought my rifle to the shoulder, and let fly at the leader and largest of the trio. I aimed to take him in the shoulder-blade, and either kill or disable him at the first shot.

My rifle rang out on the still night air, and immediately following it there was a terrific roar, which told that my bullet had hit its mark. Following the roar was a rush toward my position; the victim of my shot desired revenge, and in order to obtain it made for the direction of the flash.

His companions followed him, and the whole three came dashing on through the outlying mass of thorn-bushes and up to the very front of the kraal. But an African lion is not proof against the wait-a-bit thorn. The only animals that can successfully defy this product of the African soil are the elephant, rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and alligator. Well, yes, I do not think the buffalo minds the wait-a-bit, at least when he is old, and his skin has acquired the proper toughness; but the young buffalo treats it with respect after he has become experienced in its qualities.

The lion came no farther than the fence, just outside the hut on which I stood; another leap and he would have reached me.

This reminds me of one night when I was in camp in the Impanyi country and had not made a strong kraal. The lions came around the kraal at night, and I was waked up suddenly by hearing one of the oxen bellowing and the dogs

barking. The night was pretty dark, and it was not easy for me to perceive objects more than fifteen or twenty feet away. My tent was pitched close to the rear of the wagon; when I got outside I saw the driver standing on the top of a grass-hut about six feet high, which was near the front wheels of the wagon. The ox was bellowing and the lion was growling; they were not more than twenty yards from me, but it was so dark that I could not see them. I climbed to the top of the hut by the side of the driver, and after fixing my eyes steadily on the spot for some minutes I thought I could make out the lion's form. At any rate, I fired in that belief, and the growl and roar which immediately followed told me I had made a hit. The ox was evidently dead by this time, as all sound from him had ceased.

I put in another cartridge and fired again, this time a few inches lower than before. My shot was followed by a loud roar, far more terrific than the one which had preceded it, and the roar was followed by a spring. How many bounds the lion made I do not know, but he struck me full in the chest with his head, and sent me tumbling off the hut to the ground on which it stood. In my fall I brought with me the wagon-driver, and at first I thought it was the lion that was mixed up with me on the ground, instead of the harmless Kafir. The driver scrambled to the top of the wagon, and I followed and got on the box. I do not understand how the driver managed to get there so quickly, as the whole thing passed in a very short time.

Not only was the driver there, but all the Kafirs from the kraal; some were inside the wagon, some on top, and others standing on the wheels, or in any place where they could find clinging-room.



THE ROAR WAS FOLLOWED BY A SPRING. Page 24.

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My driver got his gun out from the inside of the wagon, and then took a shot from the top of it; the recoil knocked him over and landed him on the top of my tent. It would have been a pretty serious fall for him had it not been for the tent, which broke the force of his tumble, and was badly broken up as the result.

As near as we could make out by the growling there was a family of lions, and they did not at all relish being disturbed at their meal. We all stayed in and around the wagon until daylight; the lions made off just before it came, and we ventured to descend.

I stayed in camp that day repairing damages and making ready for the lions in case they returned the next night, which I felt they were pretty sure to do. I had the men drag the remains of the ox to the best spot for getting a shot, right on the crest of a ridge a little higher up than the wagon, and about twenty-five yards from it. I had the carcass fastened down with stakes, so that they could not drag it away; then I dug a hole in the ground just under the rear of the wagon, so as to screen me and at the same time give me the horizon to shoot against.

Well, I had my revenge. The lions were there not later than an hour after dark; I heard them before seeing them, but I saw them very soon. The head of the family made his appearance first, and he stood up against the sky so that his whole figure was outlined, and I could determine just where to shoot. My greatest difficulty was to make out the front sight of my rifle; any sportsman will tell you that you cannot do any accurate shooting when the front sight is obscured. The best thing at night is to cover it with white paper, and this I did.

I gave Master Leo a shot just back of the shoulder that brought him to the ground instant. Mrs. Leo next put in an appearance; she did not give me as fair a shot, but, under the circumstances, I do not think I ought to complain. The ball entered her body just a little forward of the tail, and to one side, and plowed along until near the foreshoulder, where it stopped. My driver fired just after me, and his shot was followed by a loud roar on the part of the lioness. After a few moments the sound subsided, or rather it came from farther and farther away. We waited awhile longer, and then, as everything was quiet, we went to bed.

Daylight the next morning revealed the lion, dead, close to the remains of the ox, my shot having killed him. The lioness was half a mile away with a broken foreleg, and the bullet in her skin as I have described. With her were two cub-lions, which I wanted ever so much to keep and take to the coast; but I saw that it would be impossible to do so, and so allowed my men to finish them off.

We removed the skins of all four lions, and I took them back with me as trophies. That will do for that story. Now I will come back to where we were.

Harry got a shot at another of our disturbers, and then the growling died away in the distance and finally ceased altogether. We went back to our beds and were not called again. When we rose in the morning we found that our shots had told, as a lion and lioness, both severely wounded, were on the ground half a mile or so from camp. Jack went out with his rifle and finished them in short order, and the Kaffirs removed their skins.

CHAPTER IV.

NARROW ESCAPE FROM A BUFFALO—A DIVERGENT EXCURSION.

At breakfast we had a difference of opinion as to what we should do during the day. I wanted to hunt elephants, in case any could be found; Harry thought we ought to take the horses and try for elands, gemsbok, hartbeest, or some others of the antelope family that abounds in the open country; Jack suggested that a turn at buffalo would suit him best, and he had learned from his tracker that there was a herd of buffalo off to the westward.

"Whereabout to the westward?" queried Harry.

"As near as I can make out," replied Jack, "it is somewhere in the direction where those women are encamped."

Harry gave a low whistle, and said he thought it might be just as well to make an effort for those buffaloes; in fact, he preferred buffalo-hunting to anything else, provided the game was in that direction. I was of the same opinion, and so it was decided that after breakfast we should start on a buffalo-hunt.

Hunting the buffalo is pretty nearly as dangerous sport as hunting the elephant. The African buffalo is a large and vicious beast, and has great strength and endurance. He is an ugly-looking brute at his best, and his disposition is quite

in keeping with his personal beauty. One of my first adventures with a bull-buffalo nearly cost me my life.

It was one afternoon near sunset, when I was camped with a party in the Amaswazi country. I was taking a stroll a mile or so away from camp, and had a dog with me, and also my tracker and gun-bearer. I saw plenty of birds and small game, but nothing that I cared to shoot, and was about to turn back when Mirogo, the tracker, suddenly made a motion of silence, and pointed with his spear to a little thicket of wait-a-bit thorns. I could not see anything at first, but in a minute or so discovered the outline of a large buffalo about sixty yards distant. I suppose he had gone into the thorn-thicket for the pleasure of titillating his hide, and the African wait-a-bits ought to be just the thing for that purpose. The hide of the African buffalo is fully as thick as that of an American one; it is a saying of old plain-men in America that there is nothing in the world which gives so much pleasure to a healthy old *Bos Americanus* of the bull sort as a scratch with a brad-awl, and a good-sized brad-awl is about the equivalent of a wait-a-bit thorn.

Well, I stalked along quietly, until I got within about thirty yards of that buffalo, and took a shot at his shoulder. He ran away, with the dog after him, and I followed up as fast as I could. The dog brought him to bay in a place which was not at all agreeable; I was inexperienced in buffalo-hunting, and went into the clump of bushes where he was, much nearer than was prudent. He saw me and charged; I did not have time to bring the rifle to my shoulder, and just fired a snap-shot, which glanced off his forehead like a hailstone off the roof of a house.

The shot did not seem to disturb him in the least, as he continued to charge. I jumped to one side, and must have made a tremendous jump. He was going at such a speed that the momentum of his body carried him past me; but he was so near that I certainly felt the wind which he created in his rush. The dog stuck to him like a leech, and very soon brought him to bay in a place that was about as bad as the previous one. I went after him once more, and he came out after me, and I did not see him until he appeared through a bush not ten feet from me. He came at full speed, too, and I had no chance to fire.

There was a little path at one side, and I jumped into it. He did not go by me this time, but swung around to follow me, and the tips of his horns were very near me when I reached a small tree.

There was not time for me to climb the tree and get out of his way. Luckily there were some branches growing out from the root of it, just about parallel to the ground, and about two feet above it. I dived under the tree and lay down as flat as I could, sticking close to the roots.

The buffalo could not get at me because the branches were too stout and too close together to enable him to get his horns under them, and for the same reason he could not get near enough to trample me with his hoofs. He walked round and round that tree, evidently trying to figure out some way of extracting me from that hole. Horns and hoofs were of no use, but he managed to insert his nose among the branches, and pounded me pretty hard with it. I tried to seize him by the tongue, and if I had had a hunting-knife with me I think I could have sent him away.

The fellow pounded me so hard with his nose that it really seemed as though he were knocking the life out of me. I found myself growing weak and misty; by and by everything faded away, and the next I knew my tracker and gun-bearer were pouring water over my face to revive me. I owed my life to those two men, and acknowledged my obligation by making them, the next day, some handsome presents, of which they were very proud. The way they saved me was this:

When they came up to where the buffalo was, after I had gone into the thicket, they looked cautiously through the bushes and saw him standing watch near me. I was lying perfectly still, and he walked off a little way, probably thinking I might try to get out of my predicament and give him a chance to impale me on his horns. The men took in the situation, and Mirogo crept up near enough to hurl his spear at the buffalo. The beast then dropped me out of his consideration, and went for Mirogo.

Mirogo ran, and at a very lively pace too. He ran for a small tree with a projecting bough, and as he came under the tree he seized the bough and swung himself up among the limbs with the agility of a monkey. The buffalo made a vicious dig at the tree, and then went off into the bush at full speed. As soon as he considered it safe to do so Mirogo came down, called my gun-bearer, and found me as I have already stated.

It did not take us long to get ready for our buffalo-hunt on the morning in question, and we started off at a very moderate pace on our horses, partly in order not to tire the beasts unnecessarily, and partly to enable our Kafirs to keep

up with us. Each of us was accompanied by two Kafirs, a tracker and a gun-bearer, and there were generally from two to half a dozen others who went along in order to see the sport and be of general usefulness.

One thing they were always useful for was to eat up any spare food that might come in their way. The quantity that a Kafir will consume is something astonishing. I dare not pretend to say how many pounds of meat one of them can get away with in a sitting, lest I might be supposed to be romancing. We generally engaged our Kafirs at so much for the trip, making no mention of time. Time is of no consequence to them as long as they are fed; and as they eat pretty nearly everything that lives and moves, a hunter with any experience and any sort of decent luck can manage to subsist them.

Our horses had not been exercised for some days, and were at first inclined to be frisky. They soon toned down, however, evidently realizing that they might have hard work before the day was over, and would stand in need of all their strength. Occasionally we took a little spurt over the open country, just to shake out their limbs a little, and then settled down for a walk, during which the Kafirs came up with us. We passed the borders of the forest where we had our adventure with the elephants, and entered the valley of the river where it was fairly well wooded, with open spaces here and there.

We kept a careful lookout for the camp of the amazons, but did not see it up to the time we reached the river, nor did we see any trace of either of the fair hunters.

We halted under the shade of a large tree, and candor

compels me to say that we discussed the whereabouts of Miss Boland and her companion much more than we did the locality of the other game which we came to seek. Harry said he thought they had taken alarm and moved, while Jack felt sure that nothing of the kind had happened.

"We haven't come in the right direction," said he, "and that's where the trouble is. I'll wager three to one they haven't moved at all, unless they found it judicious to move their camp and bring it nearer to ours."

I did not express any opinion either way on the subject, as I did not want to appear particularly interested in it.

In a little while, perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes, one of our trackers came in and said there were buffaloes farther along the valley toward the west. There was quite a bunch of them, he said, some twenty or more, making an assorted lot of bulls, cows, and young buffaloes. They were in a patch of thin bushes, which were sufficiently low to enable the tracker to see the backs of the beasts without difficulty.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER BUFFALOES AND ELANDS—A FORTUNATE SNAP-SHOT— ANOTHER HUNTER'S GAME.

THE question now was whether we should continue our hunting on horseback or go on on foot. It is a very two-sided question, this one of hunting buffaloes on horseback or leaving the horses behind you. The horse gives you the advantage of making a rapid pursuit of your game when it is trying to run away, and with a good horse you can easily overtake a buffalo, if you have wounded him at all severely.

On the other hand, it is difficult, yes, practically impossible, to shoot from a horse's back with any sort of accuracy. You must dismount to shoot, and when you do so you necessarily lose a little time; and quite likely your horse is restive, and will jerk your arm just as you raise the rifle to your shoulder. Then, when you try to mount again, he will make it difficult for you to do so by pulling back on the bridle and acting ugly. Horses that are perfect hunters are very hard to find in Africa, and I do not believe the rest of the world is oversupplied with them. I have heard of a great many horses that would enter into the spirit of the chase, stand like rocks when their riders wished to fire, fol-

low closely, always be ready to be mounted, and do everything else that the hunter might desire. I say I have heard of those horses, but they were always a long way off from where I was.

We decided that we would leave the horses under the tree, which was a conspicuous landmark, with two of the Kafirs to take care of them while we went on foot after the buffaloes.

Just as we were about starting, however, one of the natives reported a herd of elands about a mile to the south; whereupon Harry and Jack concluded to go after the elands, leaving the buffaloes to me. "It will diminish the chance of our hitting one another," said Harry, "which we might very likely do in the bushes where the buffaloes are; but there's less danger of that sort of trouble in the open country."

I assented to this suggestion, in which there was good sense, and remarked that it might make a variety in our stock of provisions for the next few days.

"Don't give all your attention to shooting bull-buffaloes," said Jack; "fetch down a yearling cow if you have the chance, as it will be better eating than the patriarchs of the herd."

"All right," I replied; "I'll endeavor to bring you in an assortment." And with that I started off, while they were getting their horses ready. I saw to it that I had plenty of ammunition, and Kalil was carrying my six-to-the-pound Remington, which I had cleaned up that morning.

When we reached the neighborhood of the buffaloes I filled my cartridge-belt and took my rifle from Kalil. Mirogo led the way, creeping along as cautiously as a cat—an animal

which he resembled in more ways than one. I could hear the buffaloes tramping about in the bushes; they seemed to be considerably scattered, but evidently had not been disturbed recently.

The first of the buffaloes to come into my range of vision was a magnificent bull, who towered considerably above the bushes. Mirogo, who was a little distance ahead, called my attention to the animal and then dropped back behind me. I crept along until I had a good chance at the creature's shoulder, about twenty yards away. I fired, and my bullet told, as the buffalo gave a loud roar and then looked around in my direction. Immediately on firing I slipped behind a tree, and he did not, at first, perceive me. Mirogo and Kalil had also sought the protection of trees, and the animal was evidently puzzled to know where the shot came from. He threw his head in the air, snorted, and then started forward, coming straight to the tree where I was concealed.

When a buffalo's head is elevated in the way he usually carries it when on a trot, it affords slight chance for a shot. A bullet on the forehead is pretty sure to glance off, and if aimed at any other part of the head the result will be the same. About the only thing to do, provided no broadside is presented, is to crouch low to the ground and then aim at the animal's chest. If well planted, a chest-shot is a fatal, or, at any rate, a demoralizing one.

I had shoved a fresh cartridge into the rifle, and was ready for the beast when he came on. I crouched almost to the ground behind the tree, and when he was within about fifteen paces I let him have it in the chest. He fell forward with a plunge that brought him directly against the tree. I

wiped the perspiration from my forehead, and did not venture to step out from my place of concealment for at least a minute. The buffalo has his tricks, as the reader already knows, and I wanted to be sure he was dead before I came within his reach.

I blew my whistle to summon my tracker and gun-bearer, and when they came—which was very quickly, as they were concealed close by—I had them pull the tail of the buffalo and otherwise test him. Then we marked the spot and went in pursuit of the rest of the herd.

Of course the shot had alarmed the other buffaloes, and they scattered about considerably. They were difficult to find, and for nearly half an hour we were uncertain in what direction to go. Mirogo and I held two or three consultations, and decided to push on toward the west, where the spoor showed that the animals had gone.

We worked our way along, and in a little while I had the pleasure of bringing down one of the yearling buffaloes of the kind that Jack suggested would be desirable. A single bullet sufficed for his case, as he gave me a good shot at short distance, and, besides, a yearling does not possess the strength and endurance of one of those old veterans such as I had first obtained.

During the excitement that immediately followed the shooting of this second buffalo I thought I heard the report of a gun a mile or so away to the westward. It was only a surmise, as we were just then tramping around in the bushes, and paying no attention to anything except what immediately surrounded us. I gave the subject not a moment's thought, and speedily forgot all about it, until a sudden

and very unexpected circumstance brought it to my mind again.

One of the dangers of shooting in company, in addition to hitting one another, is that of coming unexpectedly upon an infuriated beast that has been wounded by somebody else than yourself. If you are following an animal wounded by yourself you will exercise proper caution, but no skill in the art of hunting, and no amount of caution, can protect you from the charge of an ugly animal that has been wounded by some other hunter. This has happened to me on several occasions, and it happened on the buffalo-hunt which I have just been describing.

We were going along through the forest peaceably enough, Mirogo leading the way and I following, with Kalil, carrying my gun, close at my heels. No buffaloes were in sight, and there was no occasion for me to be burdened with my rifle just at that moment.

Suddenly we heard a great crashing in the bushes twenty or thirty yards away, and out of them sprang an infuriated bull, who made directly at us.

Mirogo had just time to shout "Look out, sir!" when he sprang into a small tree; but there was no tree for me to spring into. I jumped to one side of the path, and at the same time brought my rifle around, which Kalil, with great presence of mind, had shoved into my hands the moment he heard the crash. I gave the buffalo a snap-shot just behind the left shoulder as he passed me, not having time to bring the weapon to an aim. It was one of the luckiest shots I ever planted, as it brought him, dead, to the ground.

The manner of this buffalo indicated that he had been

wounded, and I was sure that he had not been wounded by me. It naturally occurred to me that our amazon neighbors had been trying their skill, and had been unsuccessful in bringing down their game, at least in this instance.

I told Mirogo to examine the buffalo for bullet-marks other than my own. He examined the body of the brute, and it turned out as I expected: the animal had been wounded, having received a bullet in the right shoulder.

It is a rule of the chase in Africa that, when several people are hunting together, the first shot is the counting one. If I fire at an animal and wound it, and it runs off in your direction, and you shoot and bring it down, the prize is mine, not yours. In some cases such a decision seems to be very unjust, but on a moment's reflection the reader will see that it is founded on justice. The first one who hits a creature disables it more or less, and through the disability that he creates the subsequent hunter or hunters are enabled to kill it.

I told Mirogo to mark the spot by attaching a rag to the tallest bush in the vicinity, and then continue in the same general direction we had been traveling. He acted accordingly, and we proceeded with our hunting, the impression being very strong on my mind that before we saw any more buffaloes we would pretty certainly meet the hunter who had planted the initial shot in the animal I had recently finished.

We went on for a mile or more without seeing or hearing anything. Then we came to a little mound, perhaps twenty feet in height, whose top gave us a view over the bushes for quite a distance. We ascended the mound and took a careful survey, knowing that if any buffaloes were in range of the spot we could not easily miss them.

Not a buffalo was in sight, but there was visible, two or three hundred yards away, a hunter with tracker and gun-bearer. I looked very carefully at the hunter, and speedily saw that it was none of our party. As the stranger came nearer I perceived that it was not the fair one whom I met the day before, but was dressed in precisely the same manner, and the movements and general appearance told me it was a woman.

"Aha!" I said to myself, "I think I am about to meet Mrs. Roberts. Miss Boland is at the camp with a headache—no, let me think! Africa is no place for headaches such as women complain of in civilized lands. Perhaps the two are hunting together, and are working the buffalo-herd from opposite sides. She continues to come this way, so I presume she has no objection to meeting me. Miss Boland evidently gave me a good character when she got back to camp. Perhaps she didn't mention me at all; may have considered the incident, and the man, too trivial to refer to. However, I'll descend from the mound and meet the lady, who quite likely will ask if I've seen any buffaloes belonging to her."

I descended from the mound and moved in the direction of the stranger. I saluted respectfully, raising my hat as I did so, and remarking that it was a fine day for hunting. What a blessing the weather is for breaking the ice in a conversation!

"Yes," was the response of the stranger, "it is a fine day for hunting or for a promenade, and what more agreeable promenade can there be than in the forest at this time?"

"I certainly know of nothing to surpass it," I replied, "and

it is my fondness for the sport that brought me to this part of the world. But let me come from generalities to particulars: have you wounded a buffalo this morning?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I have killed one and wounded another. I'm afraid I'm not a first-class shot, as I ought to have brought down the last buffalo I fired at; he was not more than twenty yards away, and I had an excellent chance at him."

"What did you aim for?"

"I tried to aim just back of the right foreshoulder, but from the way he went off I don't think I hit him there; perhaps did not hit him at all."

"It is my pleasure to inform you," said I, "that your game is secure. I heard your shot, and a little while afterward a buffalo came in my direction. He came crashing through the bushes, and charged directly at me. I was fortunate enough to be able to bring him down—fortunate in more ways than one, as he would have brought me down with a vengeance if I had not done so."

CHAPTER VI.

A DISPUTED PRIZE—RULE OF AFRICAN HUNTING—MRS. ROBERTS.

"I CONGRATULATE you," said the fair stranger; "but how are you certain that it was the buffalo I fired at?"

I explained that my tracker had examined the animal and found the wound in the shoulder, as already described. I then mentioned the rule of the chase, of which the reader knows, and told the lady that I surrendered all claim to the prize. As I did so I said, again raising my hat, "I presume I have the honor of addressing Mrs. Roberts?"

"I am Mrs. Roberts," she replied, with a smile; "but how did you know me?"

I explained briefly about my meeting with Miss Boland, and that she informed me of the name of her hunting-companion and the location of their camp, or, at least, its general direction. The lady appeared somewhat surprised, though not altogether so, and I was unable to make out from her manner whether Miss Boland had told her about encountering me in the forest, or had failed to mention the matter in any way.

I then told her my name and where our party was encamped. I offered to conduct her to the spot where her buffalo had met his death, and she assented to the proposi-

tion. Her gun-bearer was close at her heels, just as Kalil was close to mine. I told Mirogo to lead the way, and he and the other tracker showed the direction, keeping a short distance in our front. I was in no hurry to reach the spot, but thought my companion was quite willing to have the interview come to an end as soon as convenient. We conversed on hunting-topics, and altogether the conversation was an agreeable one, at least to me.

In all her talk the lady bore herself very modestly, and seemed inclined to give the credit of superior hunting-ability to Miss Boland. She magnified the exploits of her companion and depreciated those of herself.

"Miss Boland," said she, "is a fine hunter in the saddle, which I am not. It is about as much as I can do to attend to the horse and keep on his back, to say nothing of loading a rifle while going at full speed, or dismounting to take a shot. A few days ago," said she, "we chased a herd of elands. Miss Boland brought down the leader of the herd; she had a hard ride for it, and I thought she would have to give it up; but she stuck to it until she got right alongside the eland, and shot him from the saddle. I brought up the rear a good distance away, and did not get near enough for a shot with the longest-range rifle that ever was made. It is proper to say, though, that Miss Boland had a much better horse than I had; it isn't possible to get the speed out of my animal that she can out of hers. We started out on our expedition with three horses apiece, but we've lost one of them, and two others are not in serviceable condition."

"You haven't been in the tsetse-fly country, have you?" I asked.

"No, we haven't as yet," she answered, "and we're deliberating whether to go there or not. We have been told that there's some fine buffalo-hunting up in the fly country, and want to go there; but of course if we do we must leave our horses behind, or be put to the pain of seeing them die."

I may as well explain to the reader that the tsetse-fly is one of the scourges of certain parts of Africa. It is about the size of the common house-fly, or a little larger, and is harmless to horned cattle and donkeys, and also harmless to the human race; but, to use a slang expression, it is "death on horses." The bite of a tsetse-fly causes the death of a horse in a very short time; the skin swells enormously, great festering sores follow, and no remedy has yet been found for the bite. The valleys of certain rivers and lakes are infested with these flies, while other parts of the country are entirely free from them. Sometimes they are found on one side of a river but not on the other, and the alternations of heat and cold do not seem to have any effect in driving them away.

We had quite a talk about the flies, and speculated as to the reason why some animals were attacked and others exempt. Other travelers have speculated on the same subject before and since, but I presume their investigations had no more practical result than ours did.

"Our foreman told us," said Mrs. Roberts, "that up in the fly country there were great herds of buffaloes—thousands of animals in a herd—and that this was about the time for attacking them. I don't think we are quite equal to one of the large herds, but after the other hunters have gone in and broken them up we might attack some of the stragglers."

I was able to tell the lady something about that style of hunting, as I had been engaged in it the previous year. "A party of us formed a camp on a little stream called the Gumban; then we sent out native hunters in all directions to visit the drinking-places of the buffaloes, find the large troops of the animals, and break them up. The buffaloes form into these troops in the summer and get broken up in the winter by the hunters. We were lucky enough to find one of the largest troops, which was known to the natives as the 'dust-raiser.' It was several days before we struck the herd, but when we did we had lively work. My first experience with one of that herd was something to remember."

"I would like very much to hear about it," said Mrs. Roberts, "if you have no objection to telling me."

"Oh, not at all," I replied; "on the contrary, it will give me great pleasure. It was a very brief affair, as I came suddenly upon the animal when he was standing under a tree. I was not aware that any buffalo was about, and was carrying a rifle loaded for koodoo. My gun-bearer was behind me with my large rifle, and I quickly exchanged one for the other. I took a shot at the buffalo, but it was not sufficient to bring him down. He turned and charged upon me; I dodged behind a tree, and as he went past and was turning to come back at me I gave him a second shot which laid him low."

"Half an hour after that," said I, "I met my friend Harry, who was of our hunting-party, and when he caught sight of me he came forward on a run. He said he had wounded a buffalo and it had retreated into a very disagree-

able place—into a thorn-thicket, where it was not easy to follow. He proposed that we should get on opposite sides of the thicket—which was not very large—and then send our trackers in to drive the animal out.

“I had a quiet laugh to myself,” I continued, “because I saw a very large defect in his scheme. The thicket was not far off, and we went to it; but when Harry suggested that the trackers should go inside they demurred emphatically. There was a tall tree at the side of the thicket, and I proposed that Harry should climb that tree with the aid of his tracker, and from that point he would be able to see his game; I would stand at the foot of a tree at the opposite side of the thicket, and be prepared to meet the animal in case it came out at that point.

“Harry acted according to my suggestion, and after reaching an elevation of about thirty feet he called out that he could see the buffalo distinctly. Then he gave it a shot, and it looked around very much surprised, not knowing whence it was assaulted. Another shot followed, and then the beast made a break outside the thicket close to my position. I managed to lay it low, and then I shouted to Harry that he could descend from his perch.”

“I’ve been telling Miss Boland,” said Mrs. Roberts, “that a good way to shoot buffaloes—certainly a safe way—would be to climb a tree and shoot from a secure place in the limbs. She answers me that it is not a fair way of fighting, and nowhere near as exciting as the way in which the buffalo is usually hunted. I presume she is right; in fact, I know she is. She is braver than I am, and takes risks in hunting that I am unwilling to take.”

"I don't think there can be any question of your bravery, Mrs. Roberts," I replied, "after what I have seen this morning. You certainly took your chances with that buffalo, and I'll warrant you've done the same before. You have dodged behind trees and perhaps have climbed them, just as many a man has done in this African shooting."

"Oh yes," she said, with a laugh, "I'm not by any means without experience in hunting-risks, only I think it would be just as well for all of us if we consulted our safety a little more, and had some regard for the possibilities of getting back to our homes in due course of time."

"Very few people think of safety when they set out on a hunting-excursion," I replied. "Of course they consider the question a little when face to face with big game, and I don't think there would be any difference between men and women on that score. A cool head is requisite at all times, and any one who cannot command that should not venture into the hunting-field where the quarry is a dangerous one."

"I agree with you there," the lady responded, "and that's where our sex is decidedly at a disadvantage."

"How so?" I asked, with an air of wonder and surprise.

"Oh, you know perfectly well," said she, "that it's a habit of women to faint in presence of danger, and what would become of a fainting woman before an infuriated buffalo or elephant? I'm afraid it would be her last hunt."

"Yes, I am afraid of that too," I replied; "but I think you do injustice to your sex. Women generally faint after the danger is over, if they faint at all; as long as the peril is present they are as nervy as the sterner sex. Of course

that's not the invariable rule, but I think it's so in the majority of cases."

"Thank you for the compliment," she answered; "perhaps we'll have a chance to discuss this subject further. Here we are at your buffalo."

"I beg pardon, madam; not my buffalo—your buffalo."

"Oh now," she answered, "I think it belongs to you; never mind about the rule of South African hunting, as the animal had escaped me entirely, and I should never have seen it again or heard from it but for you. You had a narrow risk of your life when you brought it down."

I insisted that the animal was her prize, and that it was not proper to violate the laws of the country. "There isn't much law here," I added, "except that of custom, and nothing can be more binding than an established rule."

"Well, if you insist upon it," she replied, "rather than violate the practice of the country I will accept the prize as mine, and in doing so I thank you most heartily for the share you took in obtaining it for me. Perhaps I may have the pleasure of returning the service some time—no, stop! it isn't fair to suppose that you ever miss a shot, and consequently I should never have the opportunity."

"There never yet was a hunter," I answered—"at least I've never heard of one—who was invariably successful in his pursuit of game, especially of large game. Even such mighty nimrods as Gordon Cumming, Sir Samuel Baker, and others whose names you know, have many stories to tell of game that escaped, not only after one, but after many bullets."

"That's true," she replied; "and I remember how Cum-

ming returned on several occasions after an entire day in pursuit of elephants without securing a single one. Instead of being disheartened at the result it only nerved him to further exertion, and he persisted in the chase until he had made a good record."

Then, suddenly looking at the sky, the fair hunter asked me if I could give a guess as to what time it was. I may remark that it is not customary to carry a watch in one's pocket when out after buffaloes or elephants; the African hunter generally takes his time by the position of the sun or by rough-and-tumble guesswork.

"I think it is along in the neighborhood of noon," I answered—"certainly within an hour of it."

"Thank you, thank you very much," she responded; then she paused and surveyed the horns of her prize, and seemed to forget my presence entirely.

I took this as a hint that I had better be going; so, raising my hat, I said, "I bid you good-day, madam, and hope I may have the pleasure of meeting you again, and possibly of helping secure for you another prize like this."

CHAPTER VII.

STALKING A KOODOO—HARRY AND JACK AMONG ELANDS—CAUGHT IN A PITFALL.

I WAS bowing myself away when Mrs. Roberts, with a gracious smile, said:

"I am greatly pleased to have met you, and if it should be in your way to pass near our encampment it would give us pleasure to see you."

I thanked her for the invitation, and said it would give me pleasure to accept it. Then I made my adieus and turned back to the tree where I had separated from Harry and Jack, they going in pursuit of the elands and I starting out on foot for buffaloes.

Mirogo sent the Kafirs to skin both the buffaloes and bring in the horns and tongue of the big one and the meat of the yearling. The Kafirs reported that Harry and Jack had disappeared in pursuit of the elands; the last seen of them they had crossed a ridge to the south three or four miles away. I knew they would have a long ride for it, and if I set out in pursuit it would be a good while before I could overtake them. Away to the east, half a mile or so, the Kafirs reported some koodoos, and I thought it would be a good plan to stalk them. So, leaving Mirogo and Kalil be-

hind, I took my small rifle, with a beltful of ammunition suited to it, and away I started.

There is an old saying that you do not hunt ducks with a brass band, and you do not hunt koodoo with a tracker and a gun-bearer. Like all animals of the antelope kind, the koodoo is very shy and also very sharp-sighted. To stalk him you must do a great deal of creeping on the ground, and take advantage of every bush, tree, rock, ant-hill, or anything else that rises more than six inches from the ground. It is far easier to approach an elephant than a koodoo; in fact, it is a complete science to be an accomplished hunter of this animal or any of his African kindred. One of each herd is generally on the watch, and they seem to select him for his superior eyesight, hearing, and powers of smelling. You must study the wind down to a single point of the compass, take your bearings with the utmost care, and then creep along very much as a cat creeps after a mouse before she makes her spring. If the animals see you there is no use following them; turn right about, go in the contrary direction, and circle around until you come in on the opposite side, provided the wind will permit you to do so.

I have heard old hunters say that they were perfectly satisfied if they got one good chance in a day to shoot a koodoo. Knowing this, the reader will understand how anxious I was to succeed in my hunt, and that I was willing to put myself to a great deal of inconvenience and trouble in the hope of bagging my game.

The ground was quite open where the koodoos were, but within half a mile of them there was a stretch of scattered bushes. I made for these bushes till I got around a point

that was nearest to the herd and also was off-wind, and then I began the snake and cat business to my best abilities. I utilized every little obstruction on the ground, and when there was none I dragged myself along by means of my elbows, pushing my gun in front of me and taking care not to get dirt in the muzzle of it. There were perhaps a dozen koodoos in the herd, and one fine old buck was posted as sentinel. He kept turning slowly around, surveying all points of the compass; and whenever his head was in my direction I lay as still as the ground on which I rested. When he turned away I slipped forward a length or two, and sometimes, by great good fortune, half a dozen lengths.

The sun was hot—not only hot, but blazingly so. Whenever my hand touched the ironwork of my gun it seemed as if it would raise a blister; and with my back exposed to the rays of the orb of day, I felt as though I were standing before the furnace of an iron-foundry. The perspiration poured out of me, and had it not been for my determination to bag a koodoo I should have abandoned the chase and gone back to camp.

It was not only the heat that came near breaking me up on that hunt, but a snake, and a poisonous one at that. As I was dragging myself along over the ground, imagine my horror at seeing a serpent about six feet long lying directly in front of me and not more than three yards away! I came very near springing up and jumping backward, which of course would have ended the koodoo-hunt then and there; but I restrained myself. My next thought was to shoot the reptile, but to do so would have been equally fatal to my sport.

After a moment of thought—and it was only a moment—I adopted the tactics of the crab, and moved backward. I did not turn around, as I wanted to keep my face in the direction of his snakeship, who seemed to be asleep and sunning himself. I backed away three or four yards and then made a detour around my unpleasant neighbor, sufficiently far away from him not to disturb his slumbers.

I was afraid of coming on more snakes, but luckily that was the only one I encountered. He was what is known as a mamba, and is found in various parts of South Africa. The one I saw was a small one; we killed a snake of this kind one day under our wagon, and when he was stretched out on the grass he measured about eleven feet in length. Mambas of ten or twelve feet are by no means uncommon. Their bite is poisonous; dogs bitten by them die within an hour or two, and the same is the case with small animals. Human beings live longer, but the bite of one of these serpents is almost sure to be fatal. Some of the native tribes have a superstitious reverence for them, and do not kill them; but the majority of Africans generally try to despatch them if they can.

The herd of koodoos gradually fed around in my direction, so that they were between me and the sentinel. I wanted to bag him, but of course their position rendered it impossible. I had had my eye on him for some time, and when the rest of them got around toward where I was I thought of the Irishman who gave as his excuse for not firing at a flock of ducks, "Whenever I get a bead on one, another swims right in between him and me!"

I singled out the best buck of the herd and stalked up to

within forty yards of him. Then, when he presented a good broadside, I let him have it, and brought him to the ground. He was up almost in an instant, and so was I; and I gave him another shot, which again floored him, this time for good. I ran forward and plunged my hunting-knife into his throat to make sure that he did not escape me. Of course the others were off like the wind, but I paid no attention to them; my thirst for glory was satisfied for that day.

The men had been watching me from the tree where I left my horse. The report of the gun, the smoke, and my handkerchief, which I waved in the air, brought them, and with them my horse Brickdust, which was led along at a slow trot by the Kafir who had charge of him. I mounted and rode to camp, while the Kafirs attended to skinning the koodoo and bringing in the meat.

Harry and Jack had not reached camp when I got there, and they did not return until nearly sunset. They had good luck in their chase of the elands, Harry shooting one and Jack bringing down two. Harry's was the largest of the three, and consequently he claimed that the honors were about even. They had a lively chase after them, and by the time they got through their horses were pretty well used up.

"In two or three places," said Harry, "we came near breaking our necks in pitfalls that the Kafirs had made for game; and in one instance if it had not been for the intelligence of my horse I should have gone headlong into a hole about eight feet deep. The horse saw the hole before I did, and swerved quickly to one side; if we had gone full speed into that pitfall I am afraid it would have been all over with both horse and rider."

These native pitfalls are oftentimes a great nuisance and also a great danger to the hunter. The natives dig them in localities where the animals are apt to run, and consequently they are right in the way which a hunter takes when he is pursuing a herd. Sometimes the pitfalls are open, and strung along in connection with one another for a considerable distance. The natives surround a herd on three sides and then drive it in the direction of the traps. If an animal tumbles in he cannot get out, and is easily speared or otherwise slaughtered by his captors.

One day, while I was stalking a herd of gemsbok, I walked plump into a pitfall that was seven feet deep. The hole had been covered over with bushes, grass, and a sprinkling of earth, so that it looked for all the world like the ground in its immediate vicinity. I was sneaking along, bent nearly to the ground, with my eye on the game ahead of me, when suddenly I felt the earth give way, and it seemed as though I was dropping half-way to the other side of the world. I fetched up at the bottom all in a heap and half stunned. When I gathered myself up and rubbed my eyes I found that my gun was lying on the bottom of the pit with the muzzle directly toward me and both locks at full cock!

My hair had been standing on end when I brought myself up to a sitting posture; when I saw my gun and its position every individual hair on my head was frozen stiff!

There was a native kraal not very far from where my friends killed their elands, and of course the people came out to share in the spoils. Whenever a hunt of any kind is in progress, if there are any Kafirs or Zulus about they are sure to come, partly out of curiosity to see the sport, but

more particularly to eat up any trifle of game that may be left over. It was so in this case. My friends selected the cuts that they wanted from the animals, and hired some of the people to bring them to camp. The rest was turned over to the crowd and disposed of in short order. As a general thing these natives do not take the trouble to carry the game to their kraals, especially if they are a long way off, but they build a fire on the spot, sit down, and begin their feast.

The jackals and hyenas come around and hang about at a respectful distance, waiting for what is left over. By the time the natives are through the jackals and hyenas have pretty poor picking, unless the quantity of game is very large and the number of people small. A dozen or twenty natives will get away with the best part of a fair-sized buffalo; after they have eaten their fill they lie down and rest until there is space for a little more, when they rise and resume eating.

With the natives of South Africa it is generally a feast or a famine, and I may also remark that it is very much the same with a hunter: there are days in camp when his supply of food is more than he knows what to do with, and these are preceded or followed by days when his stomach is well-nigh empty, if not entirely so.

After my friends had told their experience of the day I narrated mine. Something put it into my head to say nothing about my encounter with amazon No. 2, and so I avoided all allusion to the subject. I thought I would keep the whole matter to myself until I had visited the camp of the ladies and made their acquaintance; but Harry spoiled my game

by driving me into a corner where it was necessary to lie outright or "acknowledge the corn."

"By the way, Frank," said he, as we had finished our stories, "did you see anything of our neighbors, the women, about whom you told us?"

"Oh yes," I replied, "I was coming to that." (Fact is, I was not coming to it at all.)

"Well, what about it?" queried Harry. "Did you see either or both of them, or did you happen on their camp?"

Then I told what the reader knows, though really I told the story much more briefly than I have elsewhere given it. I merely remarked that I met the one who called herself Mrs. Roberts, and killed a buffalo which she had wounded.

"Oho!" said Harry, and Jack said "Oho!" at the same time.

"Well, what's the meaning of 'Oho!' I'd like to know?"

"It means," said Jack, "that you seem to have struck a streak of luck; in two days you run across both of them and make yourself agreeable. Did she invite you to call on them?"

"Yes," I answered, "in a civil sort of way; didn't appear as if she cared whether I called or not."

"Well, probably she didn't," said Harry; "but she couldn't very well avoid doing so after you'd killed a buffalo for her. One must show a little appreciation of courtesy even in South Africa. I suppose you'll call?"

CHAPTER VIII.

AFRICAN HORSE-SICKNESS—TWO NARROW ESCAPES IN ELEPHANT-HUNTING—JACK AND HIS HORSE.

"THAT'S a very natural supposition," I replied; "of course I shall. After being here in this country for weeks without hearing a feminine voice or seeing a white woman's face, any one who calls himself a man would gladly accept an invitation like that. I shall certainly drop in at their camp the first time I'm that way."

"Yes, and you'll make it your way very soon," said Jack; "I would if it were my case."

"Are we in it at all?" said Harry. "Did your invitation include your friends?"

"Not as yet," said I, "but I presume it will in due course of time. At any rate, when I do visit their camp I'll mention you, as I have already, and will give you good characters—that is, as good as I can."

"Thank you," said Jack; "and we'll promise when our turn comes that we'll sound your praises."

We had a little more good-natured raillery on this subject, and just as it ended we were called out to look at one of the horses, which had gone sick. He showed every symptom of the horse-disease peculiar to South Africa, which has

carried away so many animals of greater or less value. When a horse sickens it is necessary to bleed him freely, and if this is done in time he may be saved. One of the most trying things to a hunter in Africa is the loss of his horses, whether by the African disease or the tsetse-fly. The latter can be avoided by keeping away from the country where the fly abounds, but no amount of caution can avoid the former. Horses that have had the disease and have recovered are said to be "salted," and are much more valuable than those that have not passed through it. Having had it once, they are not altogether exempt from it, like a child with the measles and other infantile maladies, but they are far less liable to a second attack than they were to the first.

After the incident of the horse we sat down to supper, which consisted principally of a stew made of the koodoo that I killed, and the tongues of the elands broiled over coals of thorn-bushes, the whole washed down with coffee, and a thimbleful of brandy at the end. Then came our pipes and a chat about what we had best do the next day.

Our Kafirs reported a small herd of elephants three or four miles to the eastward. They were sighted along in the afternoon, and as they had not been disturbed at all it was thought they would remain where they were until the next day. We decided that we would go in pursuit of them, making an early start, so as to get the most of the hunt over before the great heat of the day.

In the morning we sent off the trackers an hour or so before we started ourselves, with directions to make out the position of the herd, so that we should lose no time in getting to work. We followed on horseback, and when we had

accomplished about two thirds of the distance to the forest we met a Kafir who had been sent back by Mirogo to tell us that the elephants were there. At the edge of the forest we dismounted, leaving our horses in charge of the men, under the shade of a large tree which was about a quarter of a mile from the woodland where the elephants were. Harry and Jack were posted on opposite sides of the forest, while I went into the wood, accompanied by Mirogo and Kalil. I had my two heaviest rifles, and was prepared to do good work if the opportunity offered.

The scheme was for me to do the best I could while among the trees; of course my first shot would alarm the entire herd, and as the forest was not large they would be pretty sure to run out of it. Harry and Jack were to take shots at them, if possible, from their points of concealment, and then signal for their horses to be brought, and pursue the big game on horseback over the open country. I was to come out of the wood as soon as whatever work I could do there was accomplished, and follow the example of my friends; that is, mount my horse and chase the herd.

It was not long after entering the forest before Mirogo, who was leading, came upon the spoor of the elephants. It was evident there was a number of them—all the way from five or six to twice as many—and the spoor showed that they were animals of the first class so far as size was concerned.

There was no difficulty in following the spoor, as the herd made quite a track through the underbrush, and so facilitated my movements a good deal. In a little while we heard the crashing of bushes and the usual noise that an elephant makes when he is feeding or leisurely proceeding through a

wooded country. We hurried along cautiously, and presently I caught sight of a bull with a magnificent pair of tusks.

Before I could get a shot at the fellow or any of his companions something disturbed them. What it was I did not know; perhaps they caught our wind from some direction, or, the herd being a little scattered, they may have caught the wind from the parties outside the forest and passed the signal along from one to another. They made trumpet-calls to indicate some sort of elephant-talk, and then they seemed to huddle together, as nearly as I could make out, for a consultation. At all events, they got out of my sight, and very soon I heard them crashing out of the woods at a great rate.

I knew it was useless to follow on foot, and so made my way back again out of the forest to where the Kafirs were holding the horses.

I had just reached the tree where my horse was when I saw the elephants coming out and making across the open country for another patch of forest three or four miles away. There were four bull-elephants and five or six cows; the bulls were magnificent fellows and the cows by no means an ordinary lot. I was nearer to the herd than either Jack or Harry, and that gave me choice of the beasts. I singled out the largest of the bulls and gave chase.

Ranging my horse up alongside I gave him a couple of bullets just back of the shoulder, aiming wild, of course, as the horse was at a gallop and there was no time to dismount. After the second bullet he turned and stood facing me, as if undecided what to do. Then he came on with a terrific charge, and I wheeled the horse very quickly to avoid him.

After that he continued on his journey after the rest of the herd, and I followed him and gave him another dose. This brought the elephant around again, and as he came about I determined to give him a ball in the chest; and this time I put in the gun a cartridge with an explosive ball, which would certainly astonish him, at any rate.

When I raised my gun for the purpose of firing, the horse tossed his head and prevented me from taking aim. While I was trying to pacify him the bull came on, and I fired at random. I evidently did not hit the elephant at all; I aimed directly over the horse's head, and think the bullet must have come disagreeably near to his ear, as he gave a sudden jerk to one side, which threw the near rein over on the off side and unfastened the curb-chain, the bit turning right around in his mouth.

Here was a pretty predicament, and if there had been time for reflection I should have regretted that I ever came to Africa to hunt elephants or other big game. The great brute was not fifty feet away from me, with his trunk elevated in the air, his immense ears flapping, and his trumpet sounding in the most vicious manner. I had no control over the horse on account of the position of the reins and bit, and so I dug the spurs into his side to get a move on him somehow.

The horse went straight for the elephant, and I thought it would be the end of the animal and his rider. I leaned over as far as possible on the side farthest from the elephant, and as I went by him his trunk was within six feet of me. I drove the spurs into the horse, and on he went for fifty yards or so, where we brought up against three small

trees that stood in a sort of triangle. We got through these trees, but I was nearly dragged from the horse in so doing, and it is a wonder that I was able to hold on to my gun. I clung, however, to the gun and the reins, and on we went, jumping over thorn-bushes, and through a tangled sort of thicket, and over ground full of holes.

The horse was nearly down several times, and I narrowly escaped being pitched overhead, as the ground was very heavy and not at all adapted to a promenade on horseback.

All this time the elephant was close after us and generally not more than ten or twenty yards behind us. I got clear of him by moving in circles, guiding the horse as well as possible by pressing on his neck and encouraging him in every way I could. When one is chased by an elephant the best way of escape is by doubling on him; he cannot turn quickly, and there is where you have him at a disadvantage.

As soon as there was a chance to pull up I jumped off the horse, arranged the bridle, and mounted again to pursue my elephant, who was moving in the direction the herd had taken. I came up to him and renewed the hostilities, giving him in all ten shots, and being charged three times, the last time for fully half a mile. Then I gave him an explosive bullet right between the eye and ear, and he came to the ground. My horse was completely blown by that time, and as for myself, I was ready to drop with exhaustion. It was one of the hardest chases I ever had after an elephant, and I do not know of one on which I had a closer call.

Harry and Jack went in pursuit of the herd soon after I singled out my prize. Harry said that he got up so close to one that the horse's nose almost touched him, Harry's inten-

tion being to watch a favorable moment, come around to the elephant's side, and give him a shot there. It is very little use shooting at an elephant's rear, as there is nothing but a great mass of flesh there; several ounces of lead deposited in it make no particular difference in the animal's movements. Suddenly his elephant turned to see who it was that was accompanying him; this gave a chance for a broad-side, which Harry embraced, planting a bullet in the beast's shoulder. Harry dropped back again to reload, and then followed up through a mass of tall bushes that concealed the animal from sight. He dashed on to overtake the elephant, and came near being caught by his antagonist.

The elephant had stopped in a place where the path turned suddenly, and Harry was almost under his trunk before he saw him. The bull trumpeted furiously and made a terrific charge. The horse whirled instantly, but Harry drove the spurs into him, when the two went through a mass of thorn and other bushes that they would not have dreamed of venturing into at any other time. Harry's encounter with the bushes was very evident when he turned up, as his clothes were torn in shreds and his flesh was gashed and scratched in many places; half the skin was torn from his hands, and he was not at all a presentable object for a drawing-room; and, besides, he lost his elephant!

Jack was more fortunate, for he bagged his elephant—one of the bulls—and had about as lively a time in getting him as I had with mine. In some respects it was livelier, as he was pitched from his horse while the elephant was chasing him, and the great beast actually passed within two feet of where Jack was lying at the side of the path. The horse

caught his foot in a hole and stumbled, throwing his rider to the ground; he was up on his feet in an instant and off to one side, while Jack crawled or rolled out of the path along which the elephant was coming. The animal had such a momentum that he could not stop, and after getting by he seemed to regard the horse as his principal assailant and followed him for a hundred yards or so. Then he gave up the chase and proceeded in the direction of his companions.

Jack's horse was a wonderfully docile creature; when the elephant ceased following him he stopped and waited for his master's call. Jack whistled, and the intelligent animal ran to him at once. My friend gathered up his gun, remounted, and was immediately off like the wind in pursuit of his tusker, which he soon laid low.

We spent the evening in telling the stories of our adventures during the day and laying our plans for the morrow. What they were the reader will learn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

A MORNING CALL IN SOUTH AFRICA—LADIES AT HOME—HOW MISS BOLAND KILLED A LION.

It was decided that we would go in pursuit of a herd of buffaloes which was reported to be in the locality where I met our amazonian rivals in the hunting-field. It is hardly necessary to say that the buffaloes were not the only attraction that drew us in that direction.

We were off in good season after breakfast, and accompanied by the usual party of followers. We went on horseback, and—for the benefit of the buffaloes, of course—we had our clothing carefully dusted and our hair arranged as much after the style of London or New York as is possible for a hunter in South African wilds. It may not make any difference to a buffalo how the person who kills him is habited and groomed, and up to this time we had given very little thought to the subject; now our views were materially changed, and one of my friends suggested that it was a pity we had not brought our dress suits along.

Our attendants were off a good half-hour ahead of us. We mounted our horses and followed the same general course that we had taken on our last buffalo and eland hunt. When we reached the ground where the buffaloes

were said to be, Harry and Jack went in pursuit of them, while I held my course farther to the westward, where the Kafirs said the hunting-women were encamped.

The forenoon is not fashionable calling-time in London or New York, but people are not so particular in South Africa. If one does not make it too early a forenoon call is just as proper here as an afternoon one. Of course if it is not convenient to see the caller when he arrives he can be put off with the polite fiction, "Not at home," just as easily in one part of the world as in another.

I did not have any card to send in, and when I came in sight of the camp I sent forward my after-rider to announce that Mr. Manson was coming. The after-rider went in at a gallop, thus drawing general attention upon himself and evoking a great deal of noise from several dogs that belonged to the outfit. It was certainly enough to rouse the camp and make everybody in it aware that a visitor was approaching.

When I rode up to the kraal the after-rider informed me that the ladies were at home and would see me presently. I dismounted and looked about the kraal while waiting. The camp seemed very well arranged, and I was obliged to admit to myself that the appearance of things about it was much more orderly than that of our own. The kraal was constructed of palisades and large thorn-bushes, the whole forming a fence about ten feet high, and with an outwork of thorn-bushes sufficient to deter the approach of the most enterprising lion or other African beast.

One end of the kraal was fenced off and contained the wagons and tents; the rest of the space was assigned to the

cattle when they were driven in at night, and also to the huts of the natives who formed a part of the expedition. The entrance-way was sufficiently large to admit of free ingress and egress during the daytime; at night it was securely closed, so that coming in or going out was a matter of no small moment. Before passage could be obtained the mass of material blocking the entrance had to be removed, and consequently it was necessary for every one to be inside the kraal when the gate was closed for the night.

An intelligent Dutch Boer joined me soon after I dismounted, and entered into conversation. He was the foreman or manager of the expedition, and confidentially told me that he had been up-country a good many times, but never before with women. He said their trip had been very pleasant thus far and the ladies seemed to be enjoying themselves. "They haven't killed a great deal of game," said he, "but much more than I expected they would. Women don't go hunting in this part of the world," he remarked, "except for antelope and some other small things; but I've heard they do so sometimes in other countries."

I made an evasive reply to this remark, which seemed to be put in the form of an inquiry. While not saying so, I left him to infer that it was the most ordinary thing in the world for women to go on hunting-expeditions in the country I came from, and the size of the game made no difference to the hunters.

Then he told me of some of the difficulties of their march thus far, and he dwelt on the fact that they had repeatedly been short of fresh provisions. He did not say for what reason, but I readily guessed that he meant because his fair

employers were not as diligent or skilful in obtaining game as male hunters usually are. In an African expedition the hunters are expected to keep a supply of food on hand by the active use of their weapons, and with the various attendants attached to the caravan a good deal of shooting is required.

Fifteen or twenty minutes after my arrival a servant came to ask me to step into the tent, or rather into one of the tents. I followed him and was ushered into a very comfortable dwelling of canvas, which evidently served as dining-room, parlor, reception-room, library, and the like.

Mrs. Roberts was the only occupant of the place, and she greeted me cordially. A circular table was in the middle of the tent, cut in halves, so that it could be placed against the center-pole. Four iron camp-chairs afforded seating-facilities, and some boxes and trunks around the outer edge of the tent would accommodate others in case of a rush of visitors. The floor was spread with skins and rugs, and it was elevated somewhat above the ground outside, in order to keep off dampness as much as possible. Before entering the tent I observed that a ditch had been dug around it and a drain led off to one side—a very wise precaution in South Africa, especially in the season when rains are not infrequent.

The hostess said that Miss Boland would join us in a few minutes. "We were intending," said she, "to go on a hunt to-day, but were out yesterday, and when breakfast was served we concluded to put off our excursion until afternoon. I am very glad we did so, as it has given us the pleasure of a call from you."

I bowed my acknowledgments and assured her that my pleasure at their abandonment of their morning excursion was quite as great as their own. I added that I hoped they had excellent luck the day before.

"We were not very fortunate yesterday," she replied. "We went out into the open country in pursuit of elands, koodoo, or anything else we could find there. I am frank to say that I bagged nothing, while Miss Boland was fortunate enough to bring down an eland and a hartbeest. She had a sharp ride for the eland, and stalked the hartbeest. The ground was very favorable for stalking, and she approached him with comparative ease. I tried a little stalking at the same time, but the animals took fright and ran away before I could get within range. I told you I was not much of a hunter and that the honors of our expedition belonged to Miss Boland. Here she comes."

As Miss Boland entered the tent I rose and was cordially greeted. The manners of the two ladies suggested that they certainly had not taken offense at my treatment of them at our first meeting in the forest. They looked far less like hunters than at the time I first saw them, as their hunting-costumes had been replaced by the morning wrapper of civilized femininity. I took a sly glance in search of the powder and other facial adornments which also belong to civilized life, but could not discover traces of anything of the kind. Their faces were a ruddy brown, and evidently the women had no fears that the climate of South Africa would spoil their complexions; in fact, they were allowing the complexions to take care of themselves, while enjoying the pleasures of a hunter's life.

We had a general conversation on hunting and other topics, which it is unnecessary to repeat. In fact, I would find it impossible to write a verbatim report of what was said during my visit. I was impressed with the enthusiasm which these women showed for their semi-wild life, and also with the care they had taken to provide themselves with as many of the comforts of civilization as it was possible to bring along. They had a chestful of books, most of them relating to the country they were in or the sports which attracted them, and they had not forgotten to bring along a quantity of novels and miscellaneous matter, such as one does not often find in the outfit of an African hunter. They offered me several works of fiction which they were through with, both having read them. I accepted their offer, as we were short of literature in our camp, and the books were quickly made into a parcel and handed over to my after-rider.

I remained there perhaps half an hour. As I rose to go they urged me to remain longer, just as is always the case in fashionable society, no matter how much the host may wish for the visitor's departure. I explained that my companions were hunting buffaloes in the locality where I had the pleasure of meeting the two ladies, and that they expected me to join them. This led to my explaining who my companions were and also to a further explanation as to myself.

"You already know," I said, "that my name is Frank Manson. I am from New York, and take pride in saying that my father is one of the prominent citizens of that metropolis of the western world. After my graduation from college I was taken into my father's law-office and ex-

pected in due course of time to become his partner and successor. My health became impaired and it was decided that I should take a year or two of active outdoor life. I had read the books of Gordon Cumming, Baldwin, and other South African hunters, and it did not take me long to make up my mind to visit this part of the world and take my active outdoor life in pursuit of South African game.

"When I reached the Cape I made the acquaintance of two young men who had come, the one from London and the other from Glasgow, with the same objects in view as myself. Jack Delafield is the son of a wealthy manufacturer in Scotland, and Harry Lawrence is the son of a London merchant, also reputed wealthy. They are bright, interesting fellows, and it did not take us long to form a partnership in a hunting-enterprise. They are my two companions, and we have had a royal good time together."

Mrs. Roberts said that she would certainly be pleased to meet the gentlemen, and Miss Boland acquiesced in the suggestion. I observed that Mrs. Roberts seemed to be in the position of chaperon to the younger woman; the initiative in everything was taken by the former, but whether this was accidental or otherwise I was unable to say at that time.

"Would it please you," I asked, "to visit our camp, on any day and hour that you choose, where you can see our hunting-outfit and meet my two companions?"

The ladies looked from one to the other, and I decorously turned my attention to the opposite side of the tent, so that they could express approval or disapproval to each other without coming under my eye. I fastened my gaze on a

gun-case, and not only my gaze, but my hands, whereupon Miss Boland remarked:

"That's my favorite gun—a Winchester. I have two or three other kinds, but that's the one I prefer above all others and carry more frequently than any other." Then she stepped forward, deftly opened the case, and took out the weapon.

It was, as she said, a Winchester, and one of the best of its kind. I remarked that I was familiar with the gun, as we had four of that pattern in our outfit. Of course this led to a brief dissertation on the merits of the Winchester, in which Miss Boland grew quite enthusiastic over the rapid firing qualities of the weapon.

"I never appreciated the Winchester so much," said she, "as when I killed my first lion with it. He was a grand old brute, one of the largest of his race. He had been prowling around the camp at night, and once, when the moon was bright, I went out determined to shoot him. We had put a bait out for him just on the edge of a ridge, so that when the lion came he was between me and the sky. I was about fifty yards away from him, with this rifle. The first shot did not bring him, but he gave a terrific roar. Instantly I fired a second shot, then a third, and then a fourth. The lion fell, and there was no more disturbance that night. I could not get the men to go out and see the result of my shot, as they were afraid the mate of the animal might be about and would seek revenge. The next morning they were bold enough and went; there was my lion as dead as a door-nail, and every bullet had told."

CHAPTER X.

AN INVITATION ACCEPTED—ANOTHER BUFFALO—PREPARING LUNCHEON IN STYLE.

THEN from Winchesters the talk ran to other rifles. I suspected that this diversion was in order to avoid an answer to my invitation, and at the first convenient pause in the rifle-talk I again started to leave the tent. Thereupon Mrs. Roberts stopped me and said:

“It will give us pleasure to accept your invitation, and if the weather justifies we will call at your camp the day after to-morrow.”

“Thank you very much,” I answered; “it will give us great pleasure, and if the facilities of the country permitted you might expect a band of music to welcome your arrival. But as an orchestra is not to be had we must content ourselves with the resources of the country. May I ask at about what time we may look for you?”

“Oh, somewhere in the neighborhood of noon, I suppose,” she replied.

“Will you do us the honor to take luncheon with us during your call?” I asked.

“With pleasure,” the lady answered; “and we shall look for ice-cream, oysters, and all the delicacies of London and New York combined.”

"Certainly," I replied; "all we have to do is to send to Delmonico's and Gatty's, and that we can do with the utmost ease."

This retort evoked a laugh from the twain, and under its cover I said good-day and retired.

I rode as quickly as I could to the place where my friends were engaged in hunting the buffaloes, drawing up at the tree under which we had left our horses the day before. Their horses were at the tree in the care of the Kafirs who accompanied them. I found that Harry and Jack had gone into the forest on foot and several shots had already been fired. Not wishing to run the risk of meeting an infuriated bull which one of them had wounded, and also unwilling to risk being shot while approaching the hunters, I concluded to remain outside and wait for developments.

I did not have long to wait—not more than fifteen or twenty minutes; a huge bull came rushing out of the woods and made across the open country, passing quite near the tree under which we were resting. He was followed by three or four other members of his herd, and this gave me an excellent opportunity for a buffalo-hunt on horseback.

Filling my belt with cartridges and taking my trusty Remington, I swung into the saddle and went after the bull that was leading the group. I tried to make out whether he was wounded or not, as I preferred to bring down game of my own and not an animal that, by the rules of South Africa, would belong to somebody else. There was no trace of blood on the spoor of the buffalo, and so I concluded that he had only been alarmed at the sound of the firing and possibly by a shot aimed at him which went wide of its mark.

I had no difficulty in getting alongside the brute. Evidently he had never been chased on horseback and looked upon man and horse as some sort of wild animal, possibly a modification of the giraffe, or perhaps a new kind of quagga or eland. In fact, he might easily mistake the horse for a quagga, as there is a strong resemblance between the two animals, and the man might be taken for an unusually large hump on the creature's back. At all events, he manifested no alarm whatever at my riding up alongside, but he did manifest a great deal of surprise when I sent a bullet into his side at short range. His surprise was momentary; he paused, gave a look at me, and then charged savagely in my direction.

I was ready for him and got out of his way. My horse evinced a good deal of terror as the brute rushed upon him, and made active use of his legs. The charge did not last long, and the buffalo resumed his course over the open country.

I ranged up alongside and gave it to him again, and then I saw the advantage that a Winchester would have been under the circumstances. I could have given him two or three shots before he had a chance to turn and charge, and two or three shots might have settled him where one did not.

He charged again, but this time his assault was feeble, his steps grew slower and slower; he paused, came to a dead stand, and then dropped to the ground! Another shot at the vulnerable point in his head finished him completely, and then I rode on in pursuit of the others.

I singled out a cow and hunted her down in the same way. By the time I finished her the others had disappeared

in a great clump of hack-thorn bushes, where I did not care to follow. Hunting in hack-thorn bushes is terrible work on one's clothing, not to mention his skin. For making the visit already mentioned I had donned the best of my South African equipments, and as my call was to be returned two days later I thought it just as well to keep away from the hack-thorns.

I retraced my steps in the direction of the tree where I had left the horses of my friends. There I found that Harry and Jack had driven out another bunch of buffaloes, which made off in an easterly direction; they mounted their horses and went in pursuit of the game, and had been out of sight for some time, trending away to the eastward. It was no use for me to follow, as a stern chase would be a long chase and completely use up my horse, not to speak of his rider. So I gave the Kafirs the direction for finding the two buffaloes I had slaughtered, and then, after giving my horse a breathing-spell of a quarter of an hour or so, jumped into the saddle and jogged slowly in the direction of camp.

"Glory enough for one day," I remarked to myself—"a call upon those two charming women, and two buffaloes added to my credit. I don't know that I care for any more game just at present."

While I was meditating upon the events of the morning and also considering our *menu* for lunch, suddenly, on passing a ridge, I sighted a herd of elands.

I brought my horse to a stop instantly, and with my head just above the ridge surveyed the herd, which luckily had not seen me. By going back a little and then moving along parallel to the ridge I could come upon the herd

almost within shooting-distance, and that is exactly what I did. The herd was feeding in a valley between two ridges, and before they were fairly aware of it I was upon them. I singled out the finest of the animals, which was also one of the nearest, and in less than fifteen minutes from the time I first sighted the herd the creature was lying dead at my feet. Had I followed them up it is quite likely I might have bagged another, but I repeated to myself my previous assertion—"Glory enough for one day." After marking the spot where the eland lay by tying a piece of rag (torn from my shirt) to the nearest thorn-bush, I again resumed my journey toward camp, and this time I reached it.

It was two or three hours after I got to camp before my friends returned. They had had good luck, both on foot and on horseback, Harry having killed three buffaloes and Jack two. They had a run after elands. I could not tell from their description whether it was the herd from which I had made a selection or not, but they were not as fortunate as I, not getting near enough for a shot. Altogether we made a very good day's sport, and when our closing meal of the day was ready we partook of it with a hearty relish. The old adage says that hunger is the best sauce, and we were hungry enough to have eaten a slice out of a lion.

And this reminds me that a lion is not such bad eating after all. One naturally has a prejudice against it, as the lion belongs to the feline race, and outside of China cats are not popular as food-material. I tried lion one day, principally for the reason that there was nothing else to eat and I had just shot one of the so-called "kings of beasts." It tasted somewhat like veal, but was tougher, and also had a

cattish flavor to it. I had some steaks cut from the lion and broiled over the coals, and the next morning had a stew made from the lion's flesh. The conclusion I reached was that stewed lion is better than broiled lion, as the stewing rids the flesh of the feline bouquet. If any reader of this story should have occasion to dine upon the flesh of this animal I recommend that he have it stewed or boiled, and well boiled too.

Harry and Jack were delighted when I told them of the visit that was promised to us. They immediately began making plans for the luncheon, and to put the camp in order for our fair callers. Harry ran over the inventory of his clothes and finally decided that he would don his best hunting-suit, inasmuch as he had no other except his every-day one, which was very much dilapidated. The best one was not a great deal better than the worst. As for white shirts and collars, there was nothing of the kind in our outfit; neither was there a tall hat among the three of us.

Jack's outfit and mine were very much the same as Harry's, so that there was nothing to boast of. We had our best suits carefully and severely dusted, and fished out some checked hunting-shirts which had not yet been worn.

"We're ahead of any other African hunters, I believe," said Jack, as the garments were unfolded. "I don't believe there's one in fifty that can show a clean shirt after he's been out a month from civilization."

"And a good many of them," said Harry, "can't show any shirt at all, when you come to that. We're mighty

lucky to have such a splendid wardrobe. Wouldn't be a bad idea to start a clothing-store, even with our limited stock."

The question of dress being settled, there arose the momentous one of the *menu* for luncheon. Jack said that we would paralyze them on that, and he would apply the stroke of paralysis.

This he said with a shake of the head which intimated that he knew what he was talking about. I could not make out what he was driving at, and waited patiently for the result.

We were up early the next morning, and all three set about preparations for the lunch of the next day. We cleaned out the tent and made it as presentable as possible; and by the time we were through with our work we all admitted that it had never yet been as orderly as it was then. We had three iron camp-stools and sundry chests and boxes, and we had a table, circular in form, around the center-pole. The table perplexed us, as it would seat three comfortably and four fairly well, but five around that table made altogether too close sitting.

"What's the matter," said Jack, "with ranging our two wagons side by side, and stretching the canvas cover from one wagon to the other, so as to form a big awning? Then, by means of chests and boxes, we can rig up a table under this awning, and have much more room than in the tent. We can use the tent as a reception-room, and when luncheon is ready we'll adjourn to the dining-saloon."

Harry and I accepted the suggestion as a capital one, and

it was immediately acted upon. The position of the wagons was changed, the ground beneath them was cleaned up and leveled, and the wagon-cover stretched across. We carpeted the ground with skins of some of the animals we had killed, and altogether made a very comfortable dining-hall. Jack abandoned his idea of piling up boxes to form a table, and instead of that he fashioned a temporary table out of the covers of some of the boxes, supported on sticks driven into the ground, and connected by means of cross-sticks. We were at a loss for a table-cover, but improvised one from a piece of canvas that had been brought along for mending the tent in case of its injury.

These preparations were complete by a little past noon, or enough so to make it easy to finish them in a little while. We took a slight luncheon and then went out hunting, I in pursuit of gemsbok—in which I was successful—Harry after a young buffalo, and Jack in search of vegetable provender. Jack said that a salad was necessary for a fashionable luncheon; he had seen a plant growing on the bank of the river which he thought resembled lettuce. He said he would get a quantity of the stuff and eat heartily of it that night; if it did not kill him by morning he would consider it a safe material for the concoction of the salad.

When he brought the vegetable into camp Harry and I were struck with its resemblance to lettuce. Jack said that the sea-cows ate freely of it, and therefore it was not poisonous to them. "But then, you know," he continued, "what a sea-cow can eat and what we can eat may be two different things. A sea-cow looks as if it could eat a sewing-machine or a cotton-loom without impairing its digestion, and so it's

necessary to make an experiment. I'll give the lettuce to one of the oxen and eat some myself."

I can add that neither the ox nor Jack was injured in the least by the South African lettuce; so we added it to our bill of fare, not only for that day, but for many a day thereafter, whenever we could find it.

CHAPTER XI.

ICE-MAKING IN AFRICA—A HUNTERS' LUNCHEON—AFTER GEMS- BOK AGAIN.

THE next morning Jack's stroke of paralysis in the way of a feast developed itself. He fished out from one of the wagons a box containing a small machine for making ice. The machine was small, and also its capacity: it could make two pounds of ice in three hours, and that was the utmost of which it was capable. I forget the name of the machine, but it was of French manufacture, and Jack said in case it got out of repair it was necessary to send the thing to Paris. It worked in an odd sort of way, as the ice was obtained by means of the condensation of ammonia-gas into the fluid form, and the gas was formed by building a fire under a retort. It struck me as very funny that heat was required for making ice, but so it was.

"I bought this thing in Paris," said Jack, "and brought it along, thinking it might be useful. Have thought of it several times since we came up-country, but didn't want the bother of taking it out and setting it up. But it's all right now, and I don't mind the trouble, when we're going to give a reception to ladies."

Jack put the machine in operation in the neighborhood of the cook's quarters, and detailed one of the most intelli-

gent of the men to watch it. In the meantime Harry had taken his fowling-piece and gone out to shoot some quail, which were abundant in the open region a mile or so to the south of the camp. He came back in little more than an hour with a fine string of them, and said he could have bagged enough for a London evening party had there been any occasion to do so. He also shot a bustard, and said it would make a first-rate substitute for turkey.

Our cook was a native of the soil and had not been to Paris for his training in the culinary art. His science was limited to plain stews and broils; but as to anything else he was a failure. We tried him two or three times on making bread, but the article he produced was of a quality that would have been refused by a starving beggar. We set him to work making a stew of the best parts of the young buffalo, and also intrusted him with the broiling of some gemsbok-steaks. The rest of the cooking was supervised by ourselves, and we managed to get along very well, considering our inexperience. We had a very fair quality of bread, which was prepared by Harry overnight and baked in a Dutch oven; and we also drew upon the resources of the wagon for various things. For soup we strained off the thin part of the buffalo-stew, rejecting all the rest. It was not lost, however, as the Kafirs made short work of what was left.

Altogether the *menu* for our luncheon was as follows:

Buffalo-soup
Gemsbok-steak
Boiled eland's tongue
Cutlets of roast turkey (bustard)

Broiled quail
Salad of South Africa
Bread
Claret
Iced champagne
Tea and coffee
Crackers and cheese

"That wouldn't be a bad lay-out for New York or London, would it?" said Harry, as we went over the list.

"Not by any means," I answered. "I don't believe we'll get through with it and eat heartily of every dish."

"No more do I," said Jack; "and I think we will astonish our visitors by showing what three bachelors can do when left to their own resources."

Everything was ready about noon—the time when our visitors were expected. All the articles were under the supervision of the cook, and he was threatened with instant death in case anything was missing.

While we were waiting for our guests Jack suggested that we might possibly think up something else to add to the feast, but Harry and I deterred him from so doing. He thought he might be able to bring something more out of the recesses of the wagon, but we voted that it would be useless to do so.

We were just a little pushed on the score of tableware, as our canteen was made up for four persons; but by making some of the plates and dishes do double duty, and calling into use some tin cups and tin plates, we managed to get along.

About half an hour past the meridian one of our Kafirs reported people approaching from the westward, and shortly thereafter our visitors arrived. The fair ones were accompanied by their manager and after-rider, and all were on horseback. We met them at the front of the kraal; I assisted Mrs. Roberts to dismount, while Jack showed the same civility to Miss Boland. The manager and after-rider disappeared in the direction of the kraal, where our manager took charge of them; and after presenting my two friends to the ladies I escorted them to the tent. We had been not a little curious as to the costume they would wear on their visit, but all our doubts were set at rest when they came in sight, as they were habited precisely like English or American equestriennes, and their riding-habits had a decidedly fresh and unused look; but more about that by and by.

They departed a little, though, from the fashion of civilized life in avoiding the chimney-pot hat which custom ordains for the woman on horseback. On their heads they wore the *sola topee*, or sun-hat, which is familiar to everybody in Africa and Asia, and pretty well known at present throughout Europe and the United States. And I may add that this head-gear is a pleasing addition to a woman's riding-dress and ought to be more generally used than it is.

We had a little conversation in the tent, and then I suggested to Jack and Harry that our duties as assistant cooks required our presence in the kitchen. If the ladies would excuse us we would go and see that the ice-cream was properly on the fire and the Scotch whisky browned after the style of the old country. The ladies excused us graciously, and we left them to themselves in the tent, so that they

might remove their hats and repair any little damages to hair or face which the ride might have caused. But there was more earnestness than jest in my suggestion, as we all had something to attend to in the way of preparing the feast.

We returned in a little while, and conversation was resumed on general topics. The ladies had much to say about the neatness of our camp and the stanch manner in which our kraal was constructed. I told them of our lion adventure, and added that I thought their kraal was quite as well built as ours.

"As to the neatness of things as you see them," said Jack, with the most outspoken frankness, "it is very largely due to your visit. Man, when left to himself, isn't a very orderly being, and we three fellows haven't wasted much time in making things shipshape about our camp. Each of us has his corner in the tent and leaves his things pretty much as he likes. We have a rule that no one is to disturb the property of anybody else, and we abide by it strictly. So, although everything may appear in disorder, we can each of us lay hands on everything of our own that we want, because we know exactly where it is."

Jack paused, and Harry took up the line of talk by suggesting that we had been straightening up a good deal since I returned with the announcement that the ladies were coming to visit us. "We don't think it at all right to allow you to take things as they were, but rather as you find them now. At the same time, we don't believe it proper to live under any false pretenses."

"I think I ought to blush for my conduct in this matter," I said, as Harry paused.

"How so?" queried Mrs. Roberts.

"Why, because I called at your camp without warning, while we have had two days' notice."

"Oh, but don't you remember," the lady replied, "I kept you waiting outside for at least a quarter of an hour? You can't imagine what prodigies of setting things to rights we did in those fifteen minutes."

"Well, we didn't accomplish ours in any fifteen minutes, I assure you," I answered; "to be frank about it, we were at work all yesterday forenoon."

"We appreciate the compliment, I am sure; do we not, Miss Boland?" was the reply.

"Certainly we do," said the young lady; "and I almost feel conscience-stricken for having put you to so much trouble."

"The trouble has been a great pleasure," Jack responded; "it has been more than a pleasure—it has called us back to civilization, which we were rapidly forgetting, and so becoming like the barbarians around us. No visit of men could have raised in us the energy to do what we have done—nothing short of a visit of fair women. I have often thought that if Adam had been left in Eden without the presence of Eve he would have become as great a barbarian as a South African hunter, and the only security for the animals which abounded there was that he didn't have any firearms."

"Oh, but he could have dug a pitfall for them, just as the natives do here," said Miss Boland; "or perhaps he would have driven them into a kraal and slaughtered them by wholesale."

The conversation went on in this way for a little while,

and then, as I saw our three personal attendants standing near the table, I rose and asked the ladies to walk into the dining-hall, offering my arm to Mrs. Roberts and requesting Mr. Delafield to escort Miss Boland. I remark by the way that the question of the division of two ladies among three men had previously been decided by a "toss-up," Harry being left out in the cold by this appeal to Fortune. I had Mrs. Roberts at my right; Jack came next; next was Miss Boland; and between Miss Boland and myself Harry was placed. This was about the best arrangement we could make. Harry had suggested that another woman might be obtained, so as to make the party an evenly-balanced one, by washing and dressing one of the Kafir women. Jack inquired whether she would be dressed with butter or olive-oil, and then the subject was dropped.

To tell the whole story of the visit would be tedious, and I forbear. Considering that we were in South Africa, we had an excellent luncheon; while the cooking was not up to the Delmonico standard, the food was abundant and by no means poor in quality. Our visitors praised it rapturously, and declared they had not sat down to as fine a table since they started from Walvisch Bay. Jack's salad was a success of the highest order, and received the sincere praise of everybody.

When the quail were brought Jack begged to be excused for a few moments while he went to the kitchen. He came back with five glasses, filled to the top with ice, on a battered tray which he carried in one hand, while in the other he held a bottle of champagne. Placing the tray on the table, he cut the string and allowed the cork to escape from

its confinement with its well-accustomed sound. Then he filled the glasses with champagne and passed them around to our surprised visitors and to ourselves.

I say "surprised"—they were more than surprised; they were paralyzed, as Jack predicted they would be. They sat in speechless astonishment looking at the bubbles rising around the lumps of ice, and I think both of them brought their hands to their foreheads to make sure whether they were awake or dreaming.

"Ice in the wilds of South Africa!" exclaimed Mrs. Roberts. "Who ever heard or dreamed of such a thing!"

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Boland, "this is the greatest surprise since we started from Walvisch Bay. I felt sure we would be received in princely style, but this is more than princely—it is royal; it is imperial!"

"Ladies, we drink to your very good health," said Jack, with all the grace of a master of ceremonies at a royal court. Bear in mind that he was clad in check shirt and trousers and a very shabby moleskin jacket, which was about the same as the dress of Harry and myself.

All the healths were drunk, and then we had more conversation. The coffee was brought, and Mrs. Roberts suggested that if we wished to smoke we were at liberty to do so, as the dining-room was well ventilated and smoke would be no inconvenience to them.

We thanked her and said that we did not care to smoke at that time, the usual period for our pipes being at the end of the day. After a while we adjourned from table, took a stroll outside the kraal, and managed to get fairly well acquainted all around. The ladies told us who they were,

and gave us a sufficient amount of information about their families.

The afternoon wore on, and in due time Mrs. Roberts said they had better be returning to their camp. Their horses were ordered up; but before mounting they gave us a cordial invitation to visit them at home, and the day was named for our doing so. Then we helped them into their saddles—their manager and after-rider were already mounted—and away the quartet cantered in the direction of the sun, which was much more than half-way from the zenith to the horizon.

After our visitors had disappeared we discussed them briefly, and our talk was brought suddenly to an end by the arrival of one of our Kafirs, who reported a herd of gemsbok not more than a mile away to the southward. We agreed that it would be a good settler for our luncheon to take a run in their direction, and in a few minutes we were mounted on our horses and off in pursuit of the game.

We had a good run, and a successful one too, as each of the party brought down an animal without much delay. We managed to get on three sides of the herd, and in this way confused them, thus rendering our success comparatively easy. We got back to camp a little after sunset, and when we sat down to supper Jack remarked that he had not much appetite.

"Well, that's about the way with me," said Harry; "that luncheon was enough to spoil anybody's appetite for the rest of the day."

I had a similar confession to make, and we did not linger

long over our suppers; but what we did enjoy was our smoke afterward, and we made amends for our deprivation during the day.

“Charming young woman, that Miss Boland,” said Jack, as he lit his pipe with a coal from the fire.

CHAPTER XII.

ANOTHER ELEPHANT—A MISFORTUNE—HARRY'S LUCK.

"Yes, that she is," said Harry; "girl of excellent manners, and the pink of propriety."

Of course I echoed their opinion, and added to it a similar expression in favor of Mrs. Roberts, to which both my friends assented.

"We've put them on their mettle," said Jack, "and when we go to take their lunch they'll be sure to startle us in some way."

"Yes, that they will," said Harry. "I suspected as much when they named the date for our visit. They wouldn't have put the time off so far if it had not been for their desire to make elaborate preparations."

"We'll see what we shall see," I remarked; and then the conversation changed to our plans for the next day.

"I think the elephants will suffer to-morrow," said Harry—"that is, if we can find any."

"Yes," I answered, "we ought to be in the mood for an elephant-hunt, and if we can hear of any elephants about we'll go for them."

While we were at breakfast the next morning Mirogo came and announced some elephants off to the eastward,

where the forest skirted a swamp extending to the river. He said they had been seen at the edge of the forest about daylight; there were a dozen or more of them, and some were large tuskers.

Breakfast was completed very quickly, and we were off in the direction of the elephants. We followed the same tactics as in some of the hunts already described, Harry and Jack taking opposite sides of the forest and I going among the trees to stir up the game.

Luck was on my side most emphatically, as I got a shot at a big tusker before I had been fifteen minutes away from my friends. I did not bring him down with my first bullet; he turned and charged me, and I had a lively race among the trees to escape him. His charge proved his ruin, as I dodged between two trees that were too near each other to enable him to get through; he was going at such a rapid rate that he fairly wedged himself between them. Seeing his predicament, I slipped around to one side and gave him a bullet at not more than five paces distance. That bullet was his death. He settled back on his haunches and fell prostrate on the ground. I fired another bullet into his head to make sure of him, but am satisfied that it was a waste of ammunition.

I stood motionless for several minutes, surveying my prize; and he was a prize, and no mistake! His tusks measured four feet nine and a half inches in length, each of them; and I have them now above my desk as I write. They have been greatly admired, and a high price has been offered for them, but I hope I may never be so hard up as to be compelled to sell these trophies of my hunting-experience.

I marked the spot, or rather took note of the position of

certain tall trees near where the carcass of the elephant lay, and then started off in pursuit of the others. My tracker and gun-bearer had disappeared; exactly how far they ran I could not tell, but my first work was to summon them, which I did by blowing a whistle.

I whistled and waited; whistled and waited again and again before I was answered. First came the tracker and then the gun-bearer. I abused them roundly for having run away, though I really felt that their departure was not altogether unjustifiable under the circumstances. The elephant would have made no difference between white man and black, and he was not expected to draw a line between the man who carried the gun and the one who fired it. When I had talked myself out on that subject I asked Mirogo what had become of the other elephants.

"I think they've gone into the swamp, sir," was his reply; "I haven't heard a shot from the other gentlemen."

"Well, then, the thing for us to do is to go into the swamp and find them," I remarked. "Which way does it bear?"

Mirogo indicated the direction of the swamp and then led the way to it.

The forest was bad enough to walk in, but the swamp was worse; there were about the same vines and creepers in the swamp as in the forest, and then there was the further disadvantage that it was all cut up into little hillocks or islands, with mud-holes separating the islands from one another. The islands were of various sizes, from that of the top of a barrel up to the size of a respectable parlor; and the mud-holes between the islands were anywhere from two feet to a dozen wide. In going through these mud-holes we sank half-way

to our knees—that is, if we went quickly; if we proceeded slowly we sank at least to our knees, if not deeper. Then, to add to the inconvenience, there were no trees in the swamp; at least, none large enough to afford shelter against an enraged elephant. There were some small trees, perhaps a foot in diameter, which a man could climb; but he needed the agility of a monkey to get away from his pursuer in case he got an elephant after him. I did not like that swamp a bit when we got into it, and if I had been alone I can say confidentially to the reader that I would have sneaked out and gone home. But my friends were waiting for me at the edge of the forest, and this was not a time to hesitate; I had a reputation to sustain.

Mirogo led the way into the swamp, and I followed; and before we had gone half a mile I had made two or three tumbles in the mud and water, and was covered from head to foot with black ooze. We went along as quietly as possible; but with all our care we could not help treading on an occasional stick or making some other disturbance. We could hear the elephants tramping around in the water, and they were evidently a good deal disturbed at the loss of their companion, who had fallen before my rifle. At one time they seemed to be receding from us, and I was about suggesting that we give up the chase and rejoin Jack and Harry on the open ground outside the forest.

Suddenly Mirogo, who was about ten feet in advance of me, turned around, and with finger on his lip made a motion toward the front. I crept along to his side, and when I reached it he whispered that the elephants were there—he had just seen one.

I took my gun from Kalil, and then glanced at the position to see what line of retreat I could take in case of trouble. The prospects were not favorable, and I know I felt a sinking sensation clear down into my boots, which were filled with water; but the sportsman's fire was within me, and I crept on.

Passing around a clump of bushes through a medium-sized mud-hole, and then around another clump, I came in sight of a fine bull-elephant; not as large as my first one of the morning, but still a very fine one for a hunter's bag. Unfortunately he was standing directly tail on toward me. A shot at the stern of a ship may sometimes do great damage, but not so a shot at the stern of an elephant: there is a great mass of fleshy matter there, and you can fire into it with anything short of a cannon-ball without doing much damage, and, what is more, without impeding the movements of the beast. You will simply enrage him, and that is about all.

To keep out of his sight I had to get down into a mud-hole, or rather I lay with most of my body in the mud and water, and my head and shoulders supported by one of the little islands or tussocks.

For three or four minutes the swishing and cracking of the bushes continued, and I could see the back of the elephant most of the time, but not very distinctly. Then his back disappeared and he seemed to move away, which compelled me to change my position, giving up one mud-hole for another. As I rose to an erect position I stepped on a stick, which gave way with an audible crack. Luckily the elephant at this time was engaged in smashing about among the bushes, and so did not hear me.

I crept cautiously along, and as I did so the elephant moved out from behind a large bush and presented a fine broadside. I took in the shape of his tusks and noted that they were perfect. Then I brought the rifle to my shoulder and fired.

It was a successful shot—at least, successful in one way, though disastrous in another. The elephant came down head foremost; in fact, his head was so very much foremost that it was doubled under him. He was standing just above a little island or tussock, on which lay a fallen log. Both his tusks rested on this log, and his great weight, being concentrated upon his head, broke one of the tusks short off at the lip. I heard the crack and knew that something was wrong.

The other tusk came near breaking, and I have always wondered why it did not give way; instead of doing so it tore open that side of the skull, fairly bursting the thick bone, just as the young shoot of a plant bursts the soil in which it grows. If the two tusks could have burst out in this manner it would have been a saving of time and trouble, as I then could have carried them away with me at once or sent my men to get them.

There are three ways of getting the tusks of an elephant that you have killed. If you must have them at once your only recourse is to chop them out; and chopping the tusks out of an elephant's head is no small matter. If you are encamped in the neighborhood and can wait a week or ten days, you can, at the end of that time, pull the tusks out without much difficulty. As the flesh of the animal decomposes, the tusks become loosened, just as the teeth of a horse or other animal become loose in a week or two after his death.

The third way is to have the elephant fall upon the tusks in such a manner as to pry them out of their sockets. The reader will readily perceive that this is entirely a matter of accident, and of rare accident at that. Besides, there is a risk of breaking the tusks, as happened in my case.

Well, my prize lay there. After prodding him two or three times, and having Mirogo pull his tail, to make sure that he was dead, I climbed up on his side and surveyed him. He was a magnificent bull-elephant, and probably not less than one hundred years old.

There is a good deal of dispute among African hunters as to the age of elephants, some contending that they do not live anywhere near as many years as does the Asiatic elephant. There are elephants in India known to be one hundred and fifty years old. I have never been able to see why the African pachyderm should be any less long-lived than his Asiatic brother; the characteristics of the two are so nearly alike that their habits and way of life are pretty much the same, except that the Indian elephant is domesticated and the African one is not, or, at any rate, very rarely. The khedive of Egypt generally has two or three African elephants in his collection at Cairo, and the famous Jumbo—the delight of many thousands of children in Great Britain and the United States—was a native of Africa, and not of Asia. But let us return to our hunting. As soon as I had surveyed my prize and marked his position by the surrounding trees, I sent Mirogo to look for the other elephants, I following him closely. The others had taken alarm and fled. Their spoor showed that they had scattered somewhat, and just as I was considering which spoor was the largest, so

that I might follow it, I heard three shots off on the right and then two on the left.

"Not much more chance for me to-day," I said to myself; "Harry and Jack are getting their innings now, and it's time they had them."

I was about saying we might as well give up the chase when Mirogo suggested it. "The elephants have taken the alarm," said Mirogo, "and we can't get near them any more; they're gone out into the forest, and are giving the other gentlemen a chance."

"Very well," I answered, "we'll go where the other gentlemen are, and see how much they have done."

Then I told Mirogo to lead the way to the one that was nearest. He suggested that we go first to Harry, and from Harry's position to Jack's, which would be in the direction of camp.

We retraced our steps out of the swamp into the dry ground of the forest, and then, by means of the sun and my pocket-compass, took a course as nearly as we could make out for the point where Harry was located. Before we got in sight of him we heard considerable clamor, which satisfied us that he had been successful. Such proved to be the case, as he had brought down a good-sized tusker with only three shots. His tracker and gun-bearer were detailing the incidents of the shooting to several of the natives, who had come out from camp and halted at a respectful distance until the affair was over. Several jackals had already appeared on the scene, and a dozen or more vultures were circling through the air, two or three hundred feet above the ground.

It is astonishing how quickly the jackals, vultures, hyenas,

wild dogs, and other feeders upon fresh or stale flesh will put in an appearance after an elephant or other large animal has been killed. I have been puzzled many a time to know where they came from; they seem to rise out of the ground, or drop out of the sky, as if by magic. They are useful in their way—very useful—as they perform the work of scavengers without exacting any financial reward. Even the lion does not disdain to perform his share, and when you see him associating with hyenas and jackals you have very little inclination to rank him as the king of beasts and give him all the prerogatives of royalty.

Harry was in great glee over the elephant he had shot, especially as he had had a narrow escape in the performance. He had taken his position behind a tree, close by an elephant-path leading from the open ground into the forest. He heard the elephant crashing along among the trees, and stood ready to give him a shot. Then there was a pause and the most perfect stillness, and the pause was broken by the sound of the elephant moving again, and evidently retreating farther into the wood. Harry was about to leave his position and follow on the animal's spoor, but was restrained by his tracker, who said, "Elephant come back bimeby, little while."



CHAPTER XIII.

HARRY'S SHOT—HIS TRACKER'S PREDICAMENT—AFTER HIPPOPOTAMI—ELEPHANTS AGAIN.

HARRY concluded to wait; and, sure enough, the elephant came back, as the tracker predicted. He paused again at the edge of the forest, and then came out and proceeded at a rapid walk along the path.

Harry raised his rifle and fired at the vulnerable spot, just between the eye and ear. He wounded the elephant, but did not bring him down, and then the animal turned and charged upon him, elevating his trunk and giving a vicious roar as he ran upon his antagonist.

Harry took advantage of the tree in the same way that I had done; and, according to his account, his antics were very much like mine, which the reader already knows about. The tracker climbed into the limbs of a small tree close by, thinking that there would be a place of safety. The elephant saw him ascending the tree, and abandoned the chase for Harry, in the hope of capturing the tracker.

He got under the tracker's tree just as the latter was a foot or so beyond the reaching-point. Had the elephant been five seconds earlier he could have seized the tracker with his trunk and dragged him to the ground. Failing in this, he determined to shake the man down.

Stepping back eight or ten feet, the brute ran at the tree with the force of a battering-ram. The tracker—a lithe and active Kafir—knew that his safety and life depended upon clinging to the tree, and he hung to it, as the sailors say, “enough to squeeze the tar out of the rigging.”

Three times the elephant butted at that tree, and while he was doing so Harry was making a diversion on which the infuriated animal had not counted. With his rifle at full cock, and taking advantage of the shelter afforded by a few bushes, Harry crept around until he had the elephant broadside on and not more than twelve yards distant; he gave him a second and a third shot in his most vulnerable points. The animal abandoned his tree-shaking and started again in pursuit of Harry. He took only three or four steps, however, before pausing, trembling, and then falling dead to the ground.

Then we came around to where Jack had been stationed. He had also killed his elephant, but, unfortunately, the animal was a young one. It was a tusker, it is true, but the tusks were small, as was also the elephant.

“As for a story,” said Jack, “I’m like the needy knife-grinder: I’ve none to tell. This little fellow came along, and I shot him; and that’s all there is about it.”

“Well, if that’s all about it,” said I, “we’ll go back to camp and send the men out to bring in the tusks. It’s a good morning’s work all around, and we ought to be satisfied with it.”

By the time we got back to camp it was past noon, and we were, literally, hungry as hunters. The cook was ready for us with a dinner of gemsbok-steak and stewed rhinoceros.

Rhinoceros is not by any means a bad dish, and many is the meal I have made of it. You can have it in a steak, a roast, or a stew. I think it goes best in a stew; but there is a difference of opinion on that point, just as there is in everything else in the cooking line. A young elephant is not at all bad eating, and elephants' feet, no matter whether the animal be young or old, are one of the delicacies of Africa.

To cook an elephant's foot, and do it properly, requires time and attention. First get your foot. Then dig a hole in the ground and build a fire over it; keep this fire going for two or three hours, until you have got the ground hot all around, and the hole is filled with coals and glowing ashes. Then throw your elephant's foot into the hole, covering it over with the hot ashes and embers, and build more fire over it. It will take from one hour to five or six hours to cook the foot, depending upon its size and the extent and heat of the fire. When you think it is done let it stay a little longer—say half an hour—then rake it out of the ashes, and after letting it cool enough so that you can handle it, serve it up. It will be found to be a delicious semi-gelatinous mass, suggesting broiled pigs' feet, but as much better than that commonplace dish as the elephant is nobler and larger than our bristly friend of the pigsty.

While at dinner we discussed various things to do in the afternoon, but found that all were sufficiently weary after the morning's work to be willing to keep quiet the rest of the day. At the same time we wanted to do something, and so it was proposed that we go down to the river—about two miles—and try for a hippopotamus. The hippo is a difficult beast to shoot, as he sticks pretty closely to the water, and

it is very unusual to find him on land. The time he spends out of the water is nearly always at night. The natives take advantage of this peculiarity of the beast, and make traps and pitfalls for him; and that reminds me that I came very near getting my death-blow from a hippopotamus-trap, one afternoon, while I was walking along a path near the river-bank. This is the way the thing was rigged:

An iron spear was stuck in the end of a heavy stick of wood; and as if the weight of the stick was not enough, some heavy stones were tied on each side of it, close to the end. This spear was suspended, with the point downward, right above a path which the hippopotamus followed on the way from the river to his feeding-ground. The cord by which the spear was suspended was carried over the limb of a tree and then down to the ground, where it was fastened to a trigger. This trigger was connected with a cord that extended across the path.

Now, a hippopotamus, in coming along the path, does not try to step over the cord, but pushes his clumsy feet against it. In the first place, he is taking his walk at night, and cannot see the cord; and even if he could see it his legs are too short to allow him to step over it. So he just shuffles along, pushes against it, releases the trigger, and if the trap has been properly arranged the spear comes down directly between his shoulders; his spine is pretty certainly cut in two, and if he is not killed outright he is unable to leave the spot. The natives find him in the morning, and despatch him very quickly if any life remains.

I had heard about these traps before I came into the hippopotamus region, but had forgotten all about them, when

one day I was walking along a path and came to a cord just such as I have described. It was rather high for me to step over, and the thought occurred to me that somebody must have lost a piece of cord there and I had better pick it up. I was extending my hand to take hold of it when I happened to look upward, and saw, directly above me, the weighted spear, ready to fall the instant the trigger was disturbed! I backed away from the spot very quickly, and took a course around the trap instead of venturing farther along the path.

Harry and Jack were ready for the hippopotamus-hunt before I was, and they started off, I agreeing to follow. They had previously sent away a dozen or more natives—some of them our own men, and others picked up in the vicinity—to prepare the raft necessary for a raid upon the amphibious brutes. It is better to shoot them from a raft of reeds—which can be constructed in a few minutes—than to shoot them from a boat. They can overturn a boat and make it decidedly nasty for the occupants; it is true they can shake up a raft somewhat, but they cannot overturn it or sink it anywhere near as easily as they can a boat.

My friends had been gone ten or fifteen minutes, and I was just getting ready to start, when Mirogo, my elephant-tracker, came rushing in, and said there were elephants back in the forest where we had shot them in the morning.

Here was a temptation that I could not well resist. Elephants are bigger game than hippopotami, and there is a great deal more glory, and also a good deal more risk, in shooting them. I started a man off to tell Harry and Jack to go ahead with their fun and not wait for me, and also to inform them as to the cause of my detention.

Well, we went after the elephants—Mirogo, Kalil, and I. This time I put my large cartridge-belt around my waist—I had worn my small one before—and as we neared the forest I filled it with cartridges from the supply which Kalil carried.

Mirogo had left a native to keep an eye on the movements of the herd, and as we approached the forest the man met us and guided us on our course. The herd was considerably farther to the west than the one of the morning, and as it had not been alarmed in any way it was supposed not to be the one whose numbers we had reduced with our rifles.

The locality which the new herd had sought was not at all to my liking, as the ground at the edge of the forest was covered with wait-a-bit thorn-bushes; and the reader will allow me to remark that the wait-a-bit thorn is one of the most aggravating things which the African continent produces. I do not know who gave this bush its name, but he was certainly somebody with a practical turn of mind. The wait-a-bit thorn is barbed like a fish-hook, and whenever you get into one of the bushes you cannot get out in a hurry; as fast as you release one piece of your clothing another gets entangled, and very often the stranger leaves the greater part of his wardrobe in the possession of the bush. This is particularly the case when he happens to be in a hurry; when an elephant, buffalo, lion, or other savage beast is charging upon a hunter, and a wait-a-bit thorn-bush stands in the way, the hunter has many lacerations, both of clothing and flesh, in order to escape. The natives treat one of these bushes with the greatest respect. Jack suggested

one day that the natives went naked because they could not afford to supply thorn-bushes with clothing.

We outflanked those wait-a-bits and moved into the forest, where there were no worse things than creepers. Every few minutes we paused to listen, and before a great while we heard the elephants breaking branches, and evidently feeding leisurely. Mirogo led the way, and I followed, with Kalil close at my heels, carrying my gun. We had got quite close to the herd, whose size we could not make out, though Mirogo thought there were not fewer than half a dozen elephants in it.

We were about a hundred yards away—perhaps a hundred and fifty—when the elephants paused in their feeding and began to snort uneasily. Mirogo fell back to me, and whispered that he thought something was disturbing them on the other side. It was evident we had not disturbed them, as the little wind there was blew from them to us. I concluded that it was a rhinoceros, or perhaps a buffalo, which was beyond them.

The elephant is not friendly to either of those animals, and he is especially hostile to the rhinoceros. When two of those creatures meet face to face there is pretty sure to be a fight. They do not exactly go around hunting for an encounter, but they do not, on the other hand, make any great effort to avoid one. They are terrible antagonists, the horn of the rhinoceros doing fearful work in ripping up the elephant, while, on the other hand, the elephant's tusks are apt to make deep perforations in the thick skin of the rhinoceros.

The crashing in the woods sounded nearer, and the character of it showed that the animals had stopped feeding and

were moving toward us. I seized my gun and got ready for work; and I was not a moment too soon in doing so. A stately bull-elephant appeared, walking slowly, head on, in my direction. I was screened from him behind a tree, and the course that he was taking cut me off from anything but a shot directly at the forehead. He was within twenty yards of where I stood, and had not perceived me. Mirogo was off at one side, and Kalil was crouched flat to the ground directly behind me.

CHAPTER XIV.

HUNTING GIRAFFES—NOVEL MODE OF CAPTURE—A BIG SNAKE.

THE elephant presented a good broadside toward me, and I fired; or rather I went through the motions of firing, without doing so. The cartridge was defective, and the hammer of the rifle gave forth, as it descended, the disappointing thud with which every hunter is acquainted. It is not much of a sound, but it was enough to send the elephant scampering through the forest.

My disappointment can be, as the reporters say, "more easily imagined than described." Not only was I disappointed, but I was angry—angry all through; and if the maker of that cartridge had been in my reach I am sure I could have wrung his neck.

I followed up the elephants, but it was no use; they had taken the alarm, and were making off through the forest a great deal faster than I could go.

When fully satisfied of the vanity of my pursuit I turned about and started for camp. It was too late for me to join my friends in the hippopotamus-hunt, and so I remained around camp until they arrived.

They had not much to boast of—only one hippo between them; but they proposed that we should try it again the

next day, unless something better offered in the meantime. I assented, and added that I thought a change of game would be beneficial, as elephants were getting monotonous. When we went to bed we were fully possessed of the determination to pursue the hippos; but Africa is a good deal like other countries—you never know what a day will bring forth.

So it was in our case. While we were preparing for our day's work one of our runners came in and reported a herd of giraffes in the open country to the south. That was a new kind of game for us, and we determined to go for them. Giraffe-hunting requires some good work on horseback, and also requires good shooting.

We struck out in the direction indicated by the Kafirs, and about three miles from camp came upon the spoor of the giraffes. The country was thorny and stony, and pretty bad traveling generally, but we managed to get over it somehow or other. As we rose over the crest of a ridge I was ahead, and the first to catch sight of the animals; there were eight or ten of them in the group, and they were fully five hundred yards away from us. We struck into a gallop, paying little attention to the obstructions, and gained on them at a good rate; but it is the unexpected that always happens.

My horse had never seen a giraffe before, and when I came within about twenty yards of the herd he stopped and trembled with fear. I drove the spurs into him and managed to start him, but he was as scared as a country girl when she thinks she sees a ghost.

Harry passed me and ranged up close to the giraffes, which had materially widened the distance between me and

them. The sight of the other horse gave mine confidence, and away he went as though he had suddenly found out that a giraffe is as harmless as a sheep. Harry picked out the very animal that I had selected for myself—a handsome cow. I picked out a bull which was running away from the herd and making a course for himself; he was a splendid fellow, and could go at great speed, covering as much ground with one bound of his long legs as my horse could cover with three.

When I got the bull separated from the herd my horse seemed to enter into the spirit of the thing, and dashed on through everything. I had brought along a Winchester, thinking it would be better for the business in hand than a Remington, and it did not take me long to find out that I was right. There was no possibility of dismounting to take aim, and, moreover, the giraffe was such a huge beast that it seemed as if he could be hit as easily as the side of a barn. But, after all, he is not very vulnerable, and a bullet must be well planted to disable him.

Ranging up alongside of him, and not more than ten yards away, I fired, hitting him somewhere in the neck. The shot did not seem to have any effect on him, except to turn him in my direction. Whether he intended to charge, or just made a movement of observation, I do not know; but his great head and neck towered above me like a huge tree over a small house. It seemed as if, by stooping and laying my face close to the horse's neck, I could have gone under him without touching his belly. I never realized that any animal which walked was as large as that beast.

I gave him four or five shots, planted as best I could plant them, but without any very serious effect. The next

shot, however, brought him down, as it hit him in the fore-shoulder and smashed it all to pieces. When I fired that shot I do not think I was more than two yards from him. The horse stopped as the giraffe fell, and he looked the strange beast all over with the curiosity of a countryman at a menagerie. He did not seem so much alarmed at the appearance of the beast as he was at the powerful odor which arose from him. There is a strong smell about the giraffe, which doubtless the reader may have noticed when looking at these creatures in a show.

Harry brought down his game about half a mile farther back than where I shot mine. Jack was equally fortunate, as he killed a cow; in fact, he was more fortunate than either Harry or myself, as his cow was the slickest and fattest of the three animals. I cut off the mane and tail of my giraffe as a trophy, and also took out the tongue, which is the most delicate portion of the creature. In fact, this rule holds good about most of the African game.

We saved the meat from Jack's cow, and found it very tender and good; the other two giraffes we skinned, and left the meat for the natives and wild animals. There was a Kafir village a mile or so from where our hunt took place, and you can be sure that not much of that meat was wasted. If there are any natives in the vicinity where you have shot an animal, the lions, hyenas, and jackals have very little chance for a feed, as the negroes speedily dispose of all they can hold—which is a great deal—and what they cannot hold they carry away.

Giraffe-hunting is very good sport, but it is less dangerous than hunting elephants and buffaloes, for the reason

that the giraffe is naturally an inoffensive animal. He can go at a smashing pace, and it is only by fast riding that he can be overtaken. At one time I shot six of them in three days, but I used up two horses pretty thoroughly in doing it.

I had a stern chase after one of them, which I came in sight of one day while the wagons were on the road. It occurred to me that I would follow the example of the man in California who was chased by a bear one morning directly into camp, his friends shooting the beast just as he arrived there. The man ran through the camp, and paused as he heard the shots. Coming back, he quietly remarked, "I bring in my game alive!" I thought I would manage it so as to fetch that giraffe to the wagons before killing it.

I headed him after the first shot, and, by keeping wide away from him and shouting occasionally, drove him in a circle, and fired a finishing shot within two hundred yards of the wagons. We went into camp at once, and had a grand feast without the necessity of carrying the meat any appreciable distance.

Another of the giraffes that I killed at this time plunged headlong into a tree when he received the finishing shot. His head caught in a fork of the tree about twelve feet from the ground, and remained there wedged fast. I can hardly say that that giraffe died "with his boots on," but he certainly died standing on all-fours, and remained there till he was cut down.

The next day was the time set for our visit to the camp of the ladies, and for luncheon with them. Over our supper after the giraffe-hunt we had an extended debate on the sub-

ject; a considerable part of the debate had reference to our costumes, and consisted principally of lamentations.

"What swells we would be," said Jack, "if we only had our New York and London wardrobes!"

"I'm afraid we'd get a mob of the niggers after us if we should come out fitted for a promenade on Broadway or Pall Mall," replied Harry. "These people are patient and long-suffering in enduring the vagaries of foreigners that come here, but they never could stand that."

"Isn't it quite possible," I added, "that our hosts might not appreciate our efforts in their behalf if we arrayed ourselves in gorgeous style to appear before them?"

"They would appreciate the effort," said Harry, "though they might not admire the taste. Anyway, I'll warrant they'll be dressed a good deal more after civilized fashion than after that of South Africa. But as to our get-up, they didn't seem to take any offense at it when they called upon us, and it certainly wasn't of the kind suited to a fashionable parlor."

After a good many arguments it was settled that we would get ourselves up in the best of our outfits, including the checked shirts that had come into use on the day of our luncheon. We had already had our best suits sponged down and made fairly presentable, and on these we hung our fate.

When we were saddling up next morning, preparing to start, Harry suggested that we take our rifles along, and perhaps do a little stroke of hunting on the way. I opposed this, and then we had another brief discussion, which ended in a compromise: we did not take any of the heavy weapons, but only our lighter pieces, Jack and I carrying our smallest

rifles and Harry equipping himself with a shot-gun. We were thus kept out of the temptation of chasing any big game that might fall in our way, but would be able to cope with game-birds and small animals.

In our ride across the country toward our destination we had proof of the correctness of the adage, "What odd things we see when we haven't got a gun!" Off to the south we could make out a troop of giraffes; to the north, at the edge of the forest already described, half a dozen elephants were in sight, and offering a splendid chance to the hunter properly equipped for them. When within about two miles of the amazonian hunters we descried a herd of buffaloes, and also, half a mile away from them, a herd of elands—a dozen at least. What splendid sport there was within our reach! But our weapons were not adapted to it.

Jack remarked that the game "would keep," and we might have a chance for some fun the next day.

Harry suggested that we send back to our camp for our heavy rifles, and then invite the ladies to take a run with us after luncheon, cutting that meal a little short to suit the circumstances.

Jack replied that we might be treading on dangerous ground to do so. By making the suggestion we might force them to do something much to their dislike; declining to do so, they would show the white feather as hunters; and they might not be at all desirous of letting us see their skill, or the lack of it.

"That's so," said Harry; "I didn't think of that feature of it. Guess we'll say nothing about it, nor about the game that we saw on our way."

"Oh, as to that," said Jack, "there's no harm in mentioning the game in a careless sort of way, just as though it were an every-day affair with us; and we can add that there will be a good chance for sport to-morrow. Then, if they choose to propose a joint hunt, you bet we'll accept the suggestion and lay our plans accordingly."

We had a use for our small arms, though not in the way we had expected. The sun was hot, and we rode in under a little clump of trees to rest awhile in their shade. We dismounted, and were about to throw ourselves on the ground when Jack espied an enormous snake directly above us, and darting his head as if he resented the intrusion we had made upon his domain.

"Now for your shot-gun, Harry," said Jack, as he called attention to the reptile; "give him both barrels!"

CHAPTER XV.

HOW THE SERPENT WAS CAPTURED—HOSPITABLE RECEPTION— MYSTERY OF A DONKEY.

"Hold on," I said; "that will blow his head all to pieces; we want to save his skin with as little injury as possible."

"Well, how are you going to do it?" queried Jack.

"Lasso him and strangle him," I answered; "if necessary, we can put a rifle-ball through his head—that won't damage it much—but I'd rather save him whole and untouched."

Our after-rider and fore-looper had accompanied us, and I immediately called to them. They fastened their horses to a tree, and I shouted to the fore-looper to bring the coil of rope that hung at his saddle-bow.

I told him to make a noose at the end of the rope, and try to throw it over the snake's head. He was disinclined to go very near the serpent, but I gave the assurance that we would see that no injury came to him, as we stood ready with our guns. "We'll kill the fellow anyway," I said, "on general principles. We'll shoot him all to pieces rather than let him get away, and if he makes a spring at you we'll attend to him."

The fore-looper got the rope ready, and while he was doing so the after-rider, by my directions, cut a stick about

ten feet long. I tied a piece of rag on the end of the stick, to attract the attention of the snake when the stick was held up. At the same time a similar stick, with prongs about two feet in length, was prepared, and the noose of the rope was fastened to it by tying it with a bit of twine against the stick at the fork, and also at the ends of the prongs. When all was ready the fore-looper held up the stick with the rag, just out of reach of the snake as he darted his head. It attracted his attention, and he made a dive for it, and then a second dive. As he made the second attempt to reach it, the stick with the noose of rope was held up, so that he darted his head directly through it.

I was holding on to the rope, and the instant that he fell into the trap I pulled away with all my energy. The rope tightened around the creature's neck, and we had him secure. We all lent a hand at pulling him, and it was hard pulling, you may be sure. He tightened his coils around the tree and refused to let go; I was not at all sorry that he did so, as this enabled us to get a firm grip around his neck. Not content with the one cord for strangling him, we put another about him, and drew that just as tightly as we had drawn the first. In a little while his strength relaxed, his coils loosened, and he came to the ground.

Here a new danger awaited us. He thrashed around at a lively rate, and it was necessary for us to be very vigilant to avoid being hit by his tail, which struck tremendous blows. In fact, Jack was knocked down by one of them, but he was up with the quickness of lightning and out of the way of the snake's coil. Now and then he would hit against a tree, tighten a fold or two about it, and that, of course, would set



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us to pulling again. While he was thus clinging to a tree we bent his head around another tree, and then the after-rider pushed a knife into his throat and started a furious stream of blood.

"I think that will settle him," said Jack; "he'll bleed to death in a little while, and then you'll have his skin safe and sound, with the exception of the little hole at the neck."

"It will take all day for him to become quiet," I replied; "I have seen this sort of animal before, and he has a wonderful hold upon life. He won't be through squirming until sundown."

Knowing that he could not possibly loosen the cords about his neck, and that his death was only a question of time, we sent the fore-looper back to camp to bring some of the Kafirs to watch the place, and, when the snake was sufficiently quiet, to remove his skin. One of our men was an adept at such work, and I particularly cautioned the fore-looper to put the matter in his hands. Then we rode on to our destination.

We were received in front of the kraal by the manager, whom I have already mentioned, and also by numerous Kafirs and dogs. The manager disappeared to announce our arrival, and we dismounted and gave our horses in charge of the Kafirs. Presently the manager returned, and invited us inside to the tent where I was received at my first visit.

The ladies were ready for us, and greeted us most cordially. They were clad after the manner of civilization, their dresses being of the tailor-made pattern, and of good, though not expensive, material. The garments were evidently made for use rather than show, and had been kept for

just such occasions as this. Their clothing made a sharp contrast with ours, but I do not think any of us bothered his head about that. We chatted on general topics, told about our hunting-experiences since we last met, and then Jack gave a picturesque account of our interview with the snake, to which Harry and I made occasional additions. Altogether I do not think the story lost anything in the telling; neither did the size of the snake. Miss Boland said she hoped that kind of game was not abundant in Africa—she had a decided antipathy to snakes, whether large or small; and Mrs. Roberts promptly acknowledged the same feeling.

We were still on the serpentine subject when Mrs. Roberts left the tent for a moment, and came back with the announcement that luncheon was on the table. We followed her lead into another and larger tent, which served as the banqueting-hall. It was more sumptuous than the lunching-place at our camp, as it was a real tent, while ours was a temporary affair, improvised out of a wagon-cover.

The luncheon began with cups of cold consommé, and I at once understood that they had a cook in their establishment far superior to ours. Then we had cutlets of African pheasant, fricassee of gemsbok, quail on toast—and real toast it was, too—and a salad made of the same plant as that which Jack used for his. A well-made omelet was one of the items of the feast, and we found afterward that they had sent twenty miles to a native village to obtain the eggs. They served claret and champagne. We had the laugh on them about the champagne, as we had given ice in ours; but it was not so much of a laugh after all, as they had cooled their champagne very fairly by wrapping the bottle in a

towel and hanging it in a shady place where the air had free circulation. This is a trick well known in Africa and other warm countries for cooling water or other liquids. In most tropical lands they have porous jars which allow just enough of the water to pass through to keep the surface moist, and the evaporation of this water cools the contents of the jar.

We had green pease, and two or three other vegetables grown in far-off Europe or America, and brought thence in cans. The crowning glory of the feast was a plum-pudding—one of the most delicious that I ever ate. We accused one of the ladies of its construction, but, after indulging in a little badinage concerning it, they admitted that it was one of the products of the canning industry, and they were in no way responsible for it, except for having brought it along.

Well, by the time the luncheon was over we had very materially increased our acquaintance with the fair amazons. We mentioned in the most casual way the game we had seen while coming from our camp to theirs, and suggested with equal carelessness that we thought we would go in pursuit of some of it on the next day. At the mention of the giraffes, and the account of our experiences with them, Miss Boland said she had not yet hunted one of those animals, and hoped she would have an opportunity before long.

Mrs. Roberts made a similar remark, and before we had talked much longer it was agreed that we would make up a hunting-party for the next day. Before we separated it was arranged that we would meet on the following morning, at a point about midway between the two camps, to go in pursuit of the giraffes, in case they should be found near the locality where we saw them.

"I don't know," said Miss Boland, "that I can succeed in bringing down a giraffe, but I will try."

Mrs. Roberts expressed the same doubt and also the same determination, and then we dropped the subject.

Another surprise awaited us at the end of the luncheon, when the coffee was served, and a box of cigars was produced! There is not one African hunter of the male species in a hundred that carries a supply of cigars when going up-country on a hunting-expedition; and that two ladies should be thus equipped was certainly unexpected. The thought arose in our minds as to whether our fair hostesses were themselves devoted to the weed; they allayed our suspicions by telling us that they were not smokers, either of cigars or cigarettes, but had brought along a box of cigars under the impression that they would be useful when entertaining visitors. "I am told," said Mrs. Roberts, "that 'the cigars which a woman buys' are proverbial for their badness. I wish you would tell us frankly whether these are good or not. I bought them of a shopkeeper at Walvisch Bay, and he assured me they were the best in the market."

We all declared that the cigars were excellent, whereupon Miss Boland remarked:

"I suppose you mean they're excellent for South Africa?"

"Well," said Jack, "to be frank with you, they are not the very best cigars in the world, but they are really of very good quality. The shopkeeper undoubtedly told you the truth when he said they were the best in the market—that is, the market of Walvisch Bay. None of the ports of South Africa could produce anything better, with the possible exception of Cape Town, which is accustomed to more luxury

than any other place. Set your minds at rest, ladies; any visitor to your camp who smokes a cigar will consider these of a superior quality. He is pretty sure to have been without one for a long time, and therefore will not draw comparisons between these and the choicest Havana weed that ever was made."

Soon after lighting our cigars we left the tent and strolled about the premises. To begin with, the tents were the perfection of neatness in their interior arrangements, and our hostesses were evidently good housekeepers. The little odds and ends about the place had been arranged in the most tasteful fashion, and they were evidently deriving a good deal of comfort from their wandering home. The kraal where the oxen and horses were made secure at night was strong and substantial, and the cleanliness of the interior showed a great deal of energy on the part of somebody.

Mrs. Roberts told us that their manager was a very intelligent fellow, and came from one of the Boer settlements in the Orange Free State. When they started out with him his ideas of neatness and order were very vague; but he was a good-natured chap, and they had succeeded in instilling him with their enthusiasm on that subject. "It is a case of eternal vigilance," she added, "and it is necessary for us to go over the regulations with him pretty nearly every day in order to hold him up to his duties. He has been up-country several times before, and consequently we cannot instruct him much upon his general work. He has managed so well," she continued, "that we have lost only two oxen and not a single horse since we started."

I replied that they certainly ought to be proud of such a manager, as they had been more fortunate than we.

Just as I made this remark we came around to where two donkeys were tethered. As soon as the animals caught sight of the ladies they strained at their tethers and held up their heads to be patted.

"Those are evidently your riding-animals," Harry remarked.

"Yes, we ride them sometimes," said Miss Boland, "though not as often as we do our horses. We bought the donkeys partly in the belief that they would be useful, and partly as a lark. We have had lots of fun with them, as they are the first animals of their kind ever seen in this part of South Africa. The natives have looked at them in wonder, and have queried whether the creatures are horses, dogs, or lions. In one village we came to the whole population engaged in a fierce discussion on the subject. One of the wise men said the donkeys were a new kind of dogs which the foreigners had brought along. Another said they were not dogs, but horses, and he called attention to the creatures' hoofs. Just then one of the donkeys brayed, and the crowd jumped back in astonishment and terror, crying, 'It's a lion! It's a lion!'"

CHAPTER XVI.

SNAKE CUTLETS AND STEWS—MISS BOLAND STALKS A GIRAFFE—
OXEN FOR HUNTING-PURPOSES.

WE had a good laugh over the young lady's story, and after finishing our stroll and getting back to the tent we asked for our horses, bade our entertainers good-by—not failing to remind them of our engagement for the morrow—and then mounted and headed for home.

We stopped at the place where we captured the snake, and found, as we expected, that our men had already arrived and were skinning the reptile. It was no easy piece of work, as the body of the serpent continued to squirm, although life was really extinct. The boa-constrictor is very much like the turtle in this peculiarity, and what might appear to be cruelty in skinning the animal alive was not really so. Our men made a very good job of it, and we remained until it was completed. They followed us home with the skin of the snake, and left the body for the jackals and anything else that cared to eat it.

Jack was more than half inclined to take some pieces of the game along, so that we might have constrictor-cutlets for supper or breakfast. Harry and I opposed the idea, and told him he would have to eat alone if he did so; thereupon

he abandoned the proposition. I can add by the way that I have eaten snakes of various kinds, and they are by no means bad eating, provided you are hungry and cannot get anything else.

My first experience in the serpent-eating line was on the North American plains, in a region where rattlesnakes abounded. Fresh provisions were scarce; and one day, when I was traveling with a party of mounted soldiers, we made our camp right in a colony of rattlesnakes, though we did not discover it until after all the tents had been pegged out and the camp arranged. We killed about thirty rattlers between the time we went into camp and sunset, and a dozen more were slaughtered during the night. The soldiers skinned the snakes, and served them up at breakfast under the name of "prairie-eels." Had they been called rattlesnakes I might have relucted, but as prairie-eels they were decidedly toothsome; the flesh looked like chicken, and tasted a good deal like it, too. I confess to a prejudice against eating snakes, but would rather do so any time than go downright hungry.

When we reached camp everything was quiet. Our cook had prepared us a very good supper, but after our bountiful feast with the amazons we could not do justice to it. There were, however, plenty of yawning mouths in the camp where it was welcome, and nothing was left over to be warmed up the next morning.

During the night we were disturbed by a troop of lions that tried to get into the kraal for a waltz among the oxen. They made several efforts to penetrate the thorny fence of the kraal, but were unsuccessful, though they disturbed the

oxen a good deal and set them to bellowing in terror. We went out in the hope of bringing down one or more of the prowlers, but the night was so dark that we could not make out their forms distinctly. We fired where we thought we saw them, and brought forth a terrific roar, but we did not see anything drop.

Bright and early the next morning our manager began searching for the spoor of the lions, and easily made it out. He followed the retreating spoor for a good half-mile to where it led into a thicket of thorns. There he abandoned the chase, as he saw no blood upon the spoor to show that our bullets had told; and, furthermore, he had not lost any lions, as he remarked when he got back to camp. I admired his discretion, as he would have been decidedly at a disadvantage had he entered the thicket and found the lions waiting for him.

We breakfasted early in the morning, in order to be promptly at the rendezvous for the hunt with our friends. We were there on time, and so were they, and all were equipped for business. The ladies were habited as they were when I first met them in the forest—that is, incased in loose trousers and tunic, with gloves to match, and with dust-colored *sola topees* on their heads. They were accompanied by trackers, gun-bearers, and their after-rider, and they had brought along two dogs and two oxen as a part of their equipment.

When our salutations were over Jack apologized for being inquisitive, but said he would like to know how they proposed to utilize dogs and oxen in hunting giraffes.

“We don’t know that we shall utilize them,” replied

Mrs. Roberts, "but we brought them along thinking they might be handy, on the principle set down by the lamented Toodles."

"You may laugh at us," said Miss Boland, "but I've done a little hunting with those oxen since we started out, and quite successfully, too."

"Have you hunted giraffes with them?" queried Jack.

"No, not yet," was the reply, "but I've hunted hartbeest and gemsbok, and one day I stopped a young buffalo by the aid of old David, the brindle-ox, and got him, too. So I thought it would be no harm to try him on a giraffe."

"Accept my congratulations, please," said Jack; "I didn't know so much could be done in the hunting-field with oxen. We have some saddle-oxen in our outfit, but haven't used them yet. The Kafirs ride them to keep them in training, and we are holding them in reserve in case of any mishap to our horses."

"Of course you are aware," said Mrs. Roberts, "that not a few African hunters have found saddle-oxen of great advantage in their journeys."

"Oh yes, I'm aware of that," said I; "Andersson, who discovered Lake Ngami, had a saddle-ox named Spring, which he rode over two thousand miles, and he naturally became much attached to the animal."

The saddle-oxen of Mrs. Roberts and Miss Boland were good-natured beasts, and had evidently received kind treatment. The ladies told us that they made it a point of having the oxen brought up every day and saddled, and they always talked to the beasts and petted them, so that they got along famously. "They were shy at first," said Miss Boland, "but

gradually got over their shyness when they found that not only were they not hurt, but they generally received some little delicacy to eat, provided we had it to give to them. We usually ride them for half an hour or so in the morning, and sometimes take them out for stalking game. They enter into the spirit of it fairly well; this is particularly the case with David, and if he could only handle a gun we might send him out alone and count on his bringing in something. This one," said she, again pointing to the brindle, "is David; and the other—the yellow one—is Goliath."

"I hope they don't entertain for each other sentiments like those which prevailed between the original parties with those names," remarked Harry, as the lady paused.

"No, I don't think they do," was the reply; "they get along very well together. Goliath is the more powerful of the two, and keeps David under control."

The ladies had their saddle-horses as well as their saddle-oxen, and the saddles for both sort of beasts were made man-fashion. We three fellows made no comment whatever upon the style of saddles, leaving it to the ladies to mention the subject if they chose to do so. Mrs. Roberts was the first to speak of it, and said they adopted them by the advice of the wife of the missionary at Walvisch Bay, who had made two or three journeys up-country.

"We came out from England," said she, "fully equipped with riding-habits and with side-saddles, and expected to bring nothing else on our journey; but the missionary's wife urged us so strongly that we each bought a man's saddle, and have used it, too. We can mount and dismount without assistance, and we find it far more convenient for

hunting-purposes than the side-saddle. As we have traveled alone all the time, we had no neighbors to make comments upon our mode of travel or concerning our way of riding, and the first time we have used our side-saddles and riding-habits in a month and more was when we accepted the invitation to visit your camp; when we got out our habits that morning we found them a good deal creased, and thought you would see that they had not been used recently."

I remarked that I noticed the creases in the habits, and thought the garments were new ones, brought out for that occasion. We all commended their good common sense in adopting the man-fashion of riding while in South Africa, and while we were doing so one of our trackers arrived with reports of the giraffes.

"They are about a mile to the south," said the tracker, "and you can get pretty close on them without being seen."

"Now's the chance for your experiment with your saddle-ox, Miss Boland," I said, turning to that lady.

"Very well," said she; "with your permission, gentlemen, I'll see what I can do. Am I to be commander in this hunt?"

"Certainly you are," we answered; "we await your orders."

"All right then, gentlemen, here they are: I'll lead off on David's back, you can follow on horseback two or three hundred yards behind me, and Kleinboy, my after-rider, will keep with you and bring up my horse. Let your tracker indicate to me where the giraffes are, and just before we come in sight of them I'll dismount from David's back and keep along at his side. Then we'll see what we shall see. After

the first fire you can all go ahead and chase the herd in any way you like; Kleinboy can bring me my horse and take away David."

"An excellent plan of campaign," I remarked—"excellent;" and the other fellows echoed my opinion. Away went Miss Boland on David's back, preceded by the tracker who had sighted the herd of giraffes. David moved at a fast walk, and the rest of us brought up the rear, as we had been directed to do.

When they reached the foot of a slight ridge the tracker indicated that the giraffes were on the other side. Then Miss Boland dismounted, and, holding the bridle in one hand and her rifle in the other, crept along in a stooping posture on the side of the ox that was farthest away from the game.

It is proper to explain that an African ox is bridled by means of a stick, about a foot long, passed transversely through the cartilage of his nose, and held in place by a piece of cord. The reins, which are generally made of half-inch or three-eighths-inch rope, are fastened to the ends of this stick; and when he gets used to the affair he minds the helm with great readiness. The cartilage of the nose is pierced like that of an unruly bull in civilized countries, and it is very sensitive to any strain upon it.

As he neared the top of the ridge David began to pluck a little grass, as if he were out on a grazing-expedition; and he continued to feed quietly along as he passed the crest of the ridge and worked down into the hollow, where the giraffes were.

Of course we lost sight of him as he went over the ridge, not daring to show ourselves to the giraffes until we heard

the sound of Miss Boland's rifle. We could only conjecture what was happening, and the time seemed long while we were waiting for the report of the weapon.

Miss Boland afterward told us that the giraffes just turned their heads toward her when David came in sight; she was peeping over his neck to see whether they took alarm or not, and also to see where to guide him. He obeyed her slightest word, or rather the slightest pull that she gave upon one or other of the reins. The giraffes took no alarm whatever, but went on with their feeding among some scattered mimosa-trees on the plain. By the aid of the ox she got within ten yards of one of the giraffes—a medium-sized cow—and then, resting the rifle over David's shoulder, and getting good aim, she put a bullet straight into the heart of the towering beast, which came to the ground instantly. Before the rest of the herd could take alarm Miss Boland fired at another giraffe, barely thirty yards away, and laid it low with a broken foreshoulder.

When we heard the reports of her rifle we came over the slope at a gallop, and away we went in pursuit of the herd. Miss Boland exchanged David for her horse as soon as the after-rider arrived, and joined in the chase with us. She lost a little time in mounting, and so we distanced her as we pursued the fleeing game.



MISS BOLAND SHOOTS TWO GIRAFFES. Page 132.

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CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. ROBERTS KILLS A GIRAFFE—HUNTING THE RHINOCEROS—
MISS BOLAND SECURES A PET.

JACK brought down a giraffe, and so did Harry. I might have done as well, perhaps, but felt that politeness required me to look after Mrs. Roberts. She disclaimed all intention of trying to kill a giraffe, unless it came around in her way. After her exploit at stalking, Miss Boland joined us, and said she would leave the fleeing herd to the gentlemen, as she thought she had already had enough glory to satisfy her for that day. So we took places in the rear of Jack and Harry, and it was not long before they were out of sight.

We were jogging demurely along, and I suppose half an hour had passed, when I saw a cloud of dust away to the southward. I was at first doubtful about it, but looking a second and a third time, I was satisfied as to its character.

"You are to have your chance now, Mrs. Roberts," I said, doubtless with a good deal of animation.

"How so?" she asked.

"Why, there comes the herd!" I answered; "you said you wouldn't shoot a giraffe unless it came in your way, and there's a lot of them coming now."

"All right, then; if they're coming I'll take a shot."

The plain was quite open where the giraffes were running, and they seemed to be headed directly for a clump of trees a quarter of a mile or so to our right.

"Come on," I shouted, as I led the way to the clump of trees. "The giraffes will go there for security, and that will give you a chance for a shot at them."

We reached the trees easily and dismounted, I holding the horses while the ladies took up their positions behind trees that would screen them well. On came the herd, and it did exactly what I expected it would do—sought the shelter of the trees. One of the animals passed within ten yards of the muzzle of Mrs. Roberts's rifle; she fired at the right time, and her shot was successful. The bullet passed through the cervical column, just above the shoulder, and brought the animal to the ground, where a second shot finished him. Miss Boland refrained from firing, and so did I, as we felt that game enough had been slaughtered for the day, and none of us believed in wanton destruction.

Not far behind the herd came Harry and Jack; they reported, as I have already said, that each had slaughtered a giraffe, and it was then unanimously voted to bring the hunt to an end. Our camp was much nearer than that of the ladies; we invited them to our establishment for luncheon, and they graciously accepted. Mrs. Roberts relieved any possible embarrassment of ours by saying:

"We sha'n't expect any such lunch as you gave us the other day—that is too much to look for more than twice in a season. We will go to your camp with pleasure, and take whatever pot-luck happens to be in order."

"Yes," echoed Miss Boland; "I am hungry enough for

whatever you offer us, from hippopotamus to buffalo or giraffe; anything will be welcome."

"Thank you very much," said Jack. "We've a bit of surprise in store for you; at least, I think we have; but I'll keep it a secret till we get to camp."

When we reached the camp we gave up our tent to our guests, sent their horses to the kraal to be fed and cared for, and then proceeded to interview our cook. Table was set, and in due time we sat down to a feast, the principal dish being an elephant's foot, which the reader already knows about. Our guests had never seen or tasted of this dish, and they praised it so warmly as to bring the blushes all over the cheeks of Jack Delafield, who had supervised its preparation.

We had several other things in the luncheon, including buffalo-steaks and rhinoceros-stew; but they received very little attention, the elephant's foot being the *pièce de résistance* of the occasion.

We lingered a reasonable while over the table, and then it was proposed that the three from our camp should accompany the two from the other on their homeward way, and possibly do a little hunting while making the journey.

We discussed the propriety of attempting to stalk gemsbok or koodoo on the way, and Miss Boland said if she had her favorite ox David along, she would show us what could be done in the pursuit of gemsbok; but the probabilities were that the after-rider, Kleinboy, had returned to the wagons with the ox; and unless a herd of game animals could be found in the neighborhood of the camp, it would be altogether too late in the day for a hunt of that sort.

I went away from the table while the hunting-question

was being settled, and went out to find Mirogo. He was regaling the cook with stories of his prowess and the wonderful things he had accomplished in previous excursions up-country with white men. Mirogo was a judicious liar, as he always placed his remarkable achievements at times and localities where it was impossible to confute him. If he found, while telling a story, that any of his auditors had the least knowledge of the affair, he subsided at once. In everything concerning our own affairs, and particularly in reports of game that had just been sighted, he was quite exact—as exact as one could possibly expect a native of South Africa to be.

When I questioned Mirogo as to the chances of game in the direction where we were going, he said he did not think there was much there just at that time. The elephants seemed to have crossed the river and gone farther north, while the buffaloes appeared to have worked away quite a distance to the westward. Some natives had told him about two or three troops of rhinoceroses, and the presence of these animals was a pretty fair indication that the elephants had gone elsewhere.

I have already stated that the elephant and rhinoceros are not friends, and generally fight when they meet. The rhinoceros and buffalo get along very well together, and I have repeatedly seen mixed herds of these two animals living on the most friendly terms. But it is not all peace and happiness with them, as they occasionally get into difficulties with one another; and when a couple of bulls get to fighting, it is generally a fight to the death.

On one occasion, when I was pursuing one of these mixed

herds through some low bushes, my attention was attracted by the vultures that were assembling from all directions near a certain spot. I rode to the place, and found a rhinoceros and a buffalo—both powerful bulls—in the agonies of death. No, they were not in agonies, as the buffalo had just died, and the rhinoceros was breathing his last. The latter had cut fearful gashes in the buffalo with the single horn that protrudes from his nose; and at the same time the buffalo had made vigorous use of those powerful horns that adorn his ugly head. I looked a few moments at the spectacle, and then went away, knowing that the vultures would very soon go at their work.

When I announced to my friends the hunting-prospects, nobody seemed particularly elated; the ladies said they had never hunted rhinoceros, and Mrs. Roberts asked if it would be proper for them to do so. I told her everything was game in Africa, and if she felt any compunctions of conscience about shooting the beasts, she might look on and see somebody else perform the work. So we mounted our horses and went off in the direction where the game was to be found.

A sturdy bull-rhinoceros is pretty nearly as dangerous when you hunt him as an elephant is. His body is unwieldy and very clumsy in appearance, but when his temper is up he can get around with it pretty rapidly. Sometimes, when he sees a hunter coming toward him, he does not wait to be fired at before charging, but goes in for the charge at once. This being the way of the animal, I suggested to the ladies that two of our party would begin the fight, while they, with the third one, could stay in the rear and look on.

It was my quiet intention to be that third one myself; but before I said so, Jack and Harry had each volunteered to look after our fair charges. Seeing that there might be some dispute on the subject, Mrs. Roberts suggested that they would take care of themselves, and all three of us might attack the game. This was a very sensible proposition, as it gave us an equal chance all around—that is, an equal chance at the rhinos, and no chance whatever for any of us to stay back and say sweet things to the ladies.

Sure enough, we found the game—about twenty rhinos of all sizes and ages. There was one cow with a calf, the calf a good-sized fellow, who ought to have been going around independently by himself. Some of the rhinos were black, and others white. The white rhinoceros is valuable for his horn, which is much superior to that of the black rhino, and his hide is also of a better quality. In fact, the black rhinoceros is of so little value that a great many hunters pass him by, and do not waste ammunition upon him. They shoot him occasionally in order to give the natives meat, or when they have the fever in their blood, and the feeling that they must kill something.

About half the animals in this herd were white, and so we went in pursuit of them. We each singled out our game, and rode up to it as closely as we could without being discovered. Then we dismounted, leaving the horses in the care of our after-rider, and stalked our way up to the game. The brute I had chosen was standing under a tree, and appeared very uneasy; he seemed to scent the danger in the air, but could not tell from what direction it was coming. I got up to within twenty yards of him, and gave him a shot

behind the shoulder, which brought him to the ground. He was up and off in a moment; or rather, he was up, but went off only two or three steps till I finished him with another shot.

Harry and Jack were less successful than I, as they had a long chase, Harry losing his animal altogether; but Jack succeeded in capturing his game just as he was entering the edge of the forest. When Harry found he would lose his, he turned in pursuit of the cow and calf that I mentioned. He stalked up within fifty yards of the cow, when she suddenly perceived him. She turned and trotted straight toward him, her manner indicating that his room would be much preferable to his company, and that it was her intention to secure his immediate departure. He had views of his own on the subject, and so gave her a shot in the chest as she approached. The calf bore quite a resemblance to a good-sized hog; his ears were sharp and pointed, his skin was very smooth and fat, and it shone like a freshly polished boot.

When the shooting was over, and those of the herd that we had not brought down had disappeared in the distance, the ladies joined us to look at our game. We cut out the horns and the tongues of the animals, and Harry suggested to the ladies that we would present them with the young rhinoceros; in fact, he would have that honor, as the game belonged to him. To this we readily assented, and told the after-rider to get a half-dozen or so of the Kafirs to carry away the little brute—not so little, either, as he weighed pretty nearly three hundred pounds!

“Wait a moment,” said Miss Boland; “before you send

for the men to carry him, let us consider what we can do with him."

"Oh, make a pet of him, Miss Boland," said I; "a young rhinoceros is a delightful pet."

"If it's all the same to you," she replied, "I think a fox-terrier or a pug would be preferable. It looks not altogether unlike a pug; perhaps he is really a gigantic dog of the pug species—who knows?"

"I'm afraid his habits of life," I replied, "are not altogether puggish; and certainly the way his mother charged at Harry just as he was about to fire indicated anything but the disposition of that inoffensive member of the canine race. Perhaps, after all, he wouldn't make a good household pet, but would do as an ornament to the kraal."

"Possibly I can tame him and use him for saddle purposes," the young lady continued. "What do you say to that, Mrs. Roberts?"

"A saddle-rhinoceros would certainly be a novelty," the other lady answered, "but I don't think it would be of much use for hunting-purposes. On seeing its kindred it might dart off and carry you among them, without giving you a chance to slip from the saddle and escape. One's life wouldn't be worth much in a herd of these creatures."

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRANSPORTING A YOUNG RHINOCEROS—HARRY AND JACK IN LOVE—ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE—JACK'S BOAT.

"WELL," said Miss Boland, after a moment's pause, "I'll accept him, with many thanks, and use him as the basis of a menagerie. We'll keep him as long as we can around the kraal, and it is possible that we'll be able to take him to Walvisch Bay on our return. It will give him a chance to see something of the world; I judge from his youthful appearance that he has never traveled far away from home, and he may yet have an opportunity to visit the Tower of London."

"Or, more likely, the Zoölogical Garden," said Jack. "He will feel more at home there than in the Tower, as no wild animals have been kept there for many and many a year."

"Oh, I may get up a show of my own; and should I do so, it will be pleasant to remember its origin. This young rhinoceros will be an excellent beginning; but I think you're going to have a hard time to get him to our camp."

"Oh, not at all," said I; "we'll show you how it will be done."

While the conversation was going on I spied a troop of hartbeest about a mile away from us, toward the east. Accompanied by Mirogo and Kalil, I made a circuit in their

direction, coming in under the cover of some bushes, and then stalking up to the herd to single out one of the largest. I got close up to him, and finished him with a single shot. Then I had Mirogo remove his skin, while I went slowly back to where the young rhinoceros was still surrounded by the group.

Meantime the Kafirs had arrived. Under my directions the after-rider tied the feet of the young rhino—tied them firmly, so that he could not move; then he laid him, with his back downward, in the skin of the hartbeest, and finally slung the skin, by means of holes cut along its edge, on a stout pole. Three Kafirs took each end of this pole on their shoulders; they were six in all, and thus had a weight of only fifty pounds each to carry, which is a mere trifle for a Kafir. Raising the pole to their shoulders, they went off at a swinging pace; and thus we demonstrated to our friends how a young rhinoceros could be transported. The fellow kept up a tremendous squealing all the time, and evidently did not like that mode of travel; yet it was not a question of his like or dislike, but of finding him a suitable home after his unfortunate bereavement.

We accompanied the ladies until we were in sight of their camp. Then, as the hour was getting late, we turned in the direction of our own wagons, and rode for them at a smart canter, reaching home just about dusk.

I had expected Jack and Harry would be enthusiastic and loquacious over the experiences of the day; on the contrary, they were decidedly moody and silent, and I came to the conclusion that both were in love and unwilling to admit it. What made the case a little awkward was that they were both

in love with one woman. Had they respectively been in love with the two women they would undoubtedly have been more talkative; but when their devotion was fastened upon one and the same individual it gave a fine chance for that verdant-eyed monster known as Jealousy. They were jealous up to the eyes—jealous all over; and from being the best of friends, they seemed to have developed, all in a day, a very pronounced feeling of hatred. Their silence toward each other drove me into a condition of taciturnity, and as we sat down to supper we were as sociable as mourners at a funeral feast where each expects that he has been left out in the will of the deceased, and the rest have got it all.

After we had eaten awhile in such profound quiet, I suggested that the method of stalking with oxen might be followed with other game than giraffes.

Silence prevailed for half a minute or more, when Harry spoke, saying, "Do you think so?"

Jack uttered not a word.

"Yes," I replied, "I certainly think so; it might be a good way to get close up to buffaloes or rhinoceroes, and possibly to elephants."

"Yes," said Jack, suddenly, "and lions too!"

"No trouble about that," I answered; "you wouldn't have to get up to the lions; the lions would get up to you very quickly, and the ox would make off as fast as he could. I am afraid it would be a bad business, both for the ox and the hunter, so far as lions are concerned."

"That reminds me," I remarked, "of the last time before this when I came on a hunting-expedition up-country. We were trekking, one day, through an open sort of plain, where

there were sufficient trees to afford cover up to within a hundred yards of the road. We had nine yoke of oxen hauling the wagon, and about twelve extra oxen driven along behind the wagon—the way, in fact, that most expeditions come up from the coast. I was on my best horse, and the other horses were ridden by the fore-looper, after-rider, manager, and others of our party. Everybody was in his place; and as we had not seen any large game, I was carrying my small rifle, ready to pick off any ordinary thing that came in our way.

“We were not very far from the settlements, and not a lion had been seen, nor the spoor of one. Suddenly a big lion came bounding out of the forest, making straight for the loose bunch of oxen at the rear of the wagon. He started from the cover of a bush which may have been fifty yards from the trail; I don’t think it was more than that. You know in what a short time a lion can go fifty yards when he gives his whole mind to it; it didn’t seem to me ten seconds from the time we saw the brute till he sprang on one of the oxen, killing him by a single stroke of his enormous paw, and setting his teeth in the neck of the unfortunate beast. It was all the work of a few seconds. The men ran in all directions except toward the lion; I brought my small rifle to bear, and gave the fellow a shot. It was enough to anger him, and nothing more. He gave a fierce growl, and seemed half inclined to come at me; and my only salvation was that he was very hungry and fell at once to devouring the ox.”

Here I paused purposely, to compel one of my comrades to say something. Harry broke the silence by asking me what I did.

"I rode to the wagon just as quickly as I could," said I, "and got one of my large rifles; then I came out, and was accompanied, very reluctantly, by one of my men. I dismounted, gave my horse to the man, walked up to within twenty yards of the lion, who was busy satisfying his hunger, and gave him a shot through the heart."

"Well," said Jack, "you lost an ox and made a lion."

"That's true," I replied; "but the loss was much greater than the gain. A lion's skin doesn't equal the value of an ox, and I doubt if you would find any hunter who would be willing to make trades of that sort."

"No indeed," said Jack; "to lose one's traveling-equipment in an expedition like this is virtually to lose everything."

In this way I managed to break the ice and get the two men more amiable to each other. Perhaps I added a little fuel to the fire in both cases by praising the skill which Miss Boland had shown in her hunting-work that day. Then I changed to the subject of the young rhinoceros, and speculated as to what use she would be able to make of the beast. I remarked that I was afraid she would never be able to teach him drawing-room manners, as he did not seem to be adapted to a higher education. Harry said he could not see why the rhinoceros could not be educated up to the same point as the elephant, with the difference that he was not as large as the elephant, and consequently not capable of holding as much knowledge.

"Hold on, Harry!" said Jack; "that doesn't make any difference at all; it's a question of brain-capacity, and not of size. The dog is the equal of the elephant in intelligence,

and you could make a hundred dogs out of one elephant—yes, a thousand of them—so far as size is concerned.”

This led them into a discussion as to the respective intelligence of dogs and elephants. Harry took the side of the elephant, and Jack that of the dog, each claiming that the animal he favored was more intelligent than the other. I put in a word occasionally, the fellows forgot their differences and their loves, and altogether we had a very pleasant evening.

Our conversation would have been very enjoyable to a party of young folks, and I wish I could repeat the instances that were narrated of the display of unusual intelligence on the part of those two animals. Each of the champions told stories of performances which certainly bordered upon reason, and nearly every story was inexplicable on the ground of instinct only. Jack claimed that the intelligence of both beasts was distinctly human. Harry opposed him, and quoted the argument of some distinguished naturalist, who said that the line between human and animal intelligence was illustrated by means of fire. No animal, however intelligent, has yet been known to light a fire, or even to keep one going after it was lighted. On the other hand, the lowest of savages can produce fire, and also can keep it going.

Jack admitted the force of the point, and then conversation drifted to our schemes for the next day.

After discussing the whereabouts of the various kinds of game, we concluded that the best available place, with our present information, was the hippopotamus-ground. The hippos had not been disturbed very recently, and perhaps we could bag two or three without much trouble.

"Before I go on any hippopotamus-hunt," said Jack, "I'm going to have a boat! Without a boat you can't do much."

"As to that," replied Harry, "there isn't a boat that one of us would trust himself in in all this part of South Africa. Do you propose to send back to the settlements for a boat?"

"No, I don't propose anything of the kind," said Jack; "I'll make a boat, and I'll do it to-morrow morning, so that it will be ready for use by noon!"

We laughed at his suggestion, but Jack said quietly, "Just you wait and see."

Before going to bed that night, Jack got out four of our largest buffalo-hides, and put them to soak in a tub, so that they would be soft and pliable by morning. He was up bright and early, and before breakfast he went out to the nearest bush and cut some poles about ten feet long and an inch and a half in diameter. He took along two of our Kafirs, who brought the poles into camp; and by the time they did so, and Jack was back from his tour, breakfast was ready.

After breakfast he marked out on the ground a space which represented the size of his boat at the gunwales. Then he split the sticks he had cut, just as a "hoop-pole" is split for its uses. Then each hoop was sharpened at the ends, and the ends were stuck in the ground at equal distances marked along the curves indicating the gunwales of the boat. When the hoops or sticks were all in place they resembled the framework of a very low and oblong Eskimo hut. Harry suggested that Jack was making a hen-coop to keep the dogs in, to which Jack replied, as before, "Wait and see."

The next move was to take the now softened buffalo-hides and spread them over the framework, straightening the places where they met by means of a sharp knife. When the hides had been properly trimmed they were sewn together, and then stretched over the framework, which they fitted, as Harry said, "like paper on the wall." I should have remarked that the series of hoops which formed the framework were braced longitudinally by longer and stronger pieces of wood, one taking the place of the keel and two others forming the gunwales, all of them firmly tied in place by a strong cord. When the hide covering was stretched over the woodwork and securely fastened at the gunwales, the boat was complete. It was lifted from its inverted position and turned right side up, the points of the sticks were cut away, and odd pieces of the hide were bound around the edge to strengthen it.

"I told you to wait and see," said Jack, "and now you see it!"

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO NARROW ESCAPES FROM CROCODILES—STALKING ELANDS
WITH LIONS IN COMPANY—GOOD RECORD FOR AN AFTERNOON.

HARRY and I admitted that Jack's effort at boat-building was highly successful, and we could see no reason why it would not serve a good purpose in hunting hippopotami.

"I got the idea of this craft," said Jack, "up among the natives of the Arctic circle. They make boats of walrus-hide, and sometimes of reindeer-skin, in just this way: they build a framework and fasten the skins around it. You have to be very particular in moving around in one of their boats, and always step on one of the timbers; never let your feet rest entirely on the hide that forms the cover, or you may make a hole through it. There's no danger of any mishap of that kind with this tough old buffalo-skin, except at the places where it is sewn together; but it will be well to observe the same rule with this craft as with those I have mentioned."

In the afternoon we got our Kafirs together—a dozen of them—and transported the boat to the river. We had previously made some paddles out of pieces of board, and the boat was also provided with two long poles for propelling it in shallow places. It floated like a duck on the water, and we all felt proud of Jack's achievement. We took along

several hippopotamus-spears, together with our rifles, and it was decided that two of us in the boat, with two natives to paddle it, would be as large a crew as she could easily sustain. The plan was to launch the boat some distance up the river, while I took my station on the bank, sitting down on a pile of reeds, and waiting for a shot at the first hippo that came along. The rest of the party moved slowly up along the river-bank, the Kafirs carrying the boat, and Jack and Harry preceding them to indicate the spot where they would launch out upon the waters.

It was very quiet sitting there all by myself, and after a little while I felt the soothing effect of the stillness, and, leaning my head forward, fell asleep. I was sitting just at the edge of the river; my feet were not three inches from the water, and my cushion of reeds was a low one. I heard nothing, saw nothing, and felt nothing until I was roused by the report of a rifle, seemingly close at hand.

Of course I was awake in an instant, and when I waked the water in front of me was whirling and churning violently, and there was a whirling and churning around my head, mingled with shouts from my friends, whose voices I recognized. They came paddling rapidly toward me with the boat, and I could see that both of them were in a state of great excitement.

"You've had a narrow escape from a horrible death!" said Jack, as the boat touched the bank and he sprang ashore.

"Why, what's the matter?" said I.

"A minute more," said Jack—"yes, half a minute—and you would have been in the jaws of a crocodile!"



MY ESCAPE FROM THE CROCODILES. Page 150.

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I felt my hair standing on end at this announcement, which I could not fully comprehend; and I replied to it with the question, "What do you mean?"

"I mean just this," said Jack: "when we came in sight of you we saw from your position that you had probably fallen asleep. As we came nearer we saw that the river in front of you was full of crocodiles; there must have been a dozen of them close to you, and a dozen more only a little distance away. They probably stopped at first to look at you out of curiosity, and then made up their minds that you would be good to eat. We saw two or three of them creeping up in your direction, and the foremost of the lot had his nose within less than a yard of your feet. We could see that he was preparing to seize you. Others were moving along in his direction, and the probabilities are that when one of them had grabbed you and pulled you into the water the others would have taken a share in the work. We fired at one of them, but not the one nearest you, for fear that in his sudden whirling about he would sweep you into the water. Immediately after firing we shouted, and the shouts and the report of the rifle drove the crocodiles away."

I then realized the dangerous position in which I had been, and made a vow never to run the same risk again. I kept that vow faithfully for a week, when I was one day out duck-shooting, and had ornamented my belt with five or six ducks. I wanted to cross the river where the water was not very deep, and thought I could do so with safety. I started in, the ducks hanging at my side, and I holding my gun between my chin and chest so as to keep it from getting wet. The water was very nearly at my neck, and I was getting

slowly along, when suddenly I saw a crocodile—an immense fellow—coming in my direction like a steamboat, not twenty yards away, his ugly snout protruding from the water.

I dropped my gun instantly, and struck out with both hands for the shore. Partly swimming and partly wading, I reached it, and got on dry land with the monster's nose about six feet behind me! That was about as close a call as the other one.

I was quite alone, and there was no way in which I could recover my gun without an almost certain risk of becoming the prey of the crocodiles. The next day all hands of us went there, and by keeping up a great noise we drove the saurians out of the way, and got a chance to drag for the gun. We worked there two or three hours, and finally recovered it. The reader may ask why we did not dive for it; but I beg him to remember that the proximity of crocodiles or alligators is not encouraging to divers, although in waters no more than five or six feet in depth.

We did not get any hippos that afternoon by means of our boat, but we killed two that were feeding on shore by cutting them off from their line of retreat to the river. They were of a very fair size, and it did not take long for our people to skin them, cut them up, and transport the meat to camp.

While we were on our way home Harry and I made a detour to the westward, partly to use up the time and partly in the hope of finding something worthy of our attention.

In a little nook at the edge of the forest we caught sight of three or four elands. It was rather unusual to see them as near as this to the forest, and we flattered ourselves that

we would be able to bring down at least two of them; so we told our trackers and gun-bearers to drop back behind us, while we crept forward to stalk the elands, which we could do with ease, on account of their nearness to the wooded country. The only drawback to the business was that there was a patch of wait-a-bit thorns exactly between them and the forest. However, we were not going to let this impediment daunt us, and felt sure we would find some way of circumventing it.

We worked our way along pretty well among the creepers and other growths that covered the ground, and had got within about sixty yards of the nearest of the elands when we were startled by a very emphatic growl that seemed to come from almost under our feet. I do not know whether I turned pale or not; Harry says I did, and I know he did. It was enough to make any one turn pale; for there, within twenty yards of us, were two lions that were engaged in a rival occupation to ours. They were stalking those very elands, and they did not relish the idea of interference. One of the lions was standing up and looking in our direction; the other was crouching with his nose pointed toward the elands.

I sidled over to Harry, meantime putting my gun at full cock and standing ready in case of a charge, and Harry doing the same thing.

"What shall we do?" whispered Harry. "Shall we back out or shoot the lions?"

"Do neither," said I; "stand where we are, backing just a little, enough to signify that we give up the chase; then I don't think the lions will molest us."

"Do you believe they'll tackle the elands, then?"

"Yes," I answered, "they probably will; and if we work it right, and the lions do what we want them to do, we'll bag the elands and the lions at the same time. See, that fellow's taking his gaze off us now, and they'll make a spring very soon."

We stood and watched and waited, but we did not have to wait long. The lions chose two of the elands—at least they acted as if they had done so, as they made a bound simultaneously; and in less time than it takes me to tell it they were on the backs of two of those animals. Both the elands fell, struck senseless by the blows of the lions' paws and by the grip of the powerful teeth just forward of the shoulder. The other elands ran away.

"Now's our chance," I said to Harry; "you get a bead on the one to the right, and I'll take the fellow on the left. They'll be so intent on their eating that they won't be likely to leave it to make a charge upon us. All the same, we'll keep under cover as much as we can."

We moved about till we got up in pretty close range. I said to Harry that we wanted to fire together as well as we could, but of course I realized that we might not get a good aim at the same time.

I was just raising my rifle to the shoulder in readiness to fire when I heard a crashing in the bush almost behind me. It sounded like a large animal, and was coming almost in my direction. I had not time to look around before a third lion bounded past me, not four feet away, and sprang upon one of the lions as he was beginning his repast on the eland he had brought down!



THE LIONS AND THE ELANDS. Page 154.



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It seemed to me that the air was getting rather thick with lions, and it would be well for us to dispose of what we had before any more arrived. The new-comer joined the lion which I had selected for my game, and therefore I had a double task before me. I waved my hands to Harry, trying to indicate that under the circumstances I had better fire first. He understood me, and withheld his shot until I had disposed of one of my beasts.

The animal gave me a good chance to do so, as he fell to quarreling with the possessor of the prize. I killed one of the lions at the first shot; the second one I wounded badly, and it took no fewer than three shots to finish him. By good luck I had my Winchester along, and poured the lead in with great rapidity. Harry was also carrying his Winchester, which he fired three times before silencing and quieting his lion. There was no need of wasting any ammunition on the elands, as they were already dead from the work of the lions. When this was completed we came out into the open and surveyed our game.

"Pretty good business," said Harry, "just for an afternoon walk."

I agreed with him that it was pretty good business, and now the question arose with Harry as to what we should do about it.

"Oh, that's very simple," I answered: "send one of the trackers to the wagon, and get all the men we can to skin the lions and cut up and carry home the elands. We'll have rather an abundance of meat in camp now, but there won't be any of it wasted. What with dogs, Kafirs, and ourselves, we can get away with a goodly amount."

"But won't Jack be jealous of us," remarked Harry, "when he finds what we've done in our little detour while going home from the river!"

"Oh, I don't think he will be jealous exactly," I answered; "he will be sorry he wasn't along, and I'm sorry he wasn't. I don't know that we could have got any more game if he'd been with us, but he might have had the satisfaction, at any rate, of shooting one of the lions."

We waited on the spot until the men came to take charge of our prizes; then we proceeded to camp, where we found Jack, who had already heard the story of our success. He congratulated us heartily, and, as I knew he would, wished he had been along.

"You've reversed the old adage," said he, "about the odd things you see when you haven't got a gun. You certainly saw a lot of very odd things, and had your guns along at the same time."

CHAPTER XX.

AN ALARM—THE LADIES MISSING—WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM— THE RESCUE.

WE dined that night on eland-steak and boiled hippopotamus, and found both dishes excellent; and we pieced out the dinner with some tinned peaches, which Jack drew from the recesses of the wagon. Blessings on the head of the man who invented tinning, or canning, edible things! They have softened the asperities of life in rough regions to a wonderful extent, and have rendered it possible for men to live a long time away from fresh meats and fruits without danger of that terrible disease, scurvy. And furthermore, they have enabled the traveler in distant lands to imagine himself in his own home when he sits down to a table containing the fruits and meats to which he was accustomed in his boyhood days.

This can of peaches recalls to my mind a Fourth-of-July dinner at which half a dozen of us Americans once sat down, far in the interior of China, on the upper waters of the Yang-tse-Kiang. We had chicken-soup, boiled salmon, roast turkey, boiled corned beef, two or three kinds of vegetables, and a plum-pudding, each and every thing having been tinned in America, and shipped thence to the Celestial Empire. And it was by no means a shabby dinner; on the con-

trary, it would have been a good one in New York or Boston. The turkey was not cut up and put into a small can, as you might imagine, but was served whole, the can having been made to fit him as though he were a Fifth Avenue "swell" and the tinsmith were a fashionable tailor.

We had our smoke after dinner, and then retired. During our smoke we laid our plans for the next day; but it is hardly necessary to say what they were, as they were not carried out.

Just as we were sitting down to breakfast, Kleinboy, the after-rider of our amazon friends, came riding into camp at full speed. We knew something was wrong, and immediately stepped out to meet him.

"What is the matter?" I asked, as soon as he drew rein and brought his panting horse to a halt.

"The ladies are missing!" he answered, "missing since yesterday!"

"Missing!" we exclaimed. "How is that?"

"They went away hunting yesterday afternoon," said Kleinboy; "said they were going after elands, giraffes, or anything else they could find; they carried their rifles, and had plenty of cartridges."

"Did they have their trackers or anybody else with them?"

"No," replied Kleinboy; "the trackers started with them, but went only a mile or two; they told the trackers they would have no use for them, and it would be impossible for them to keep up, as they were going to ride at a gallop."

"And they haven't come back yet, either of them?"

"No, neither of them."

"Nor their horses?"

"Oh yes, I forgot; the horses came back alone a little after dark; both of them came up to the kraal and made a noise, so we went out and brought them in."

"Couldn't you follow the spoor of the horses and make out where they went?"

"The manager is going to try that; but he thought the first thing to do was for me to come over here and let you gentlemen know."

"All right," I answered. Then I called our manager, and told him to see that Kleinboy had some breakfast, unless he had already breakfasted.

Jack was for starting off instantly, without waiting for breakfast or anything else; in fact, he gave the order for our horses to be saddled at once.

"No hurry about it," I said to Jack; "let us eat our breakfast, as that will only make a few minutes' difference in our starting, and if we go without it we might become faint and drop down when we most need our strength. Take in a good meal, and then we'll be off."

Harry and Jack admitted the common sense of my suggestion, and sat down to the repast. Both were quite nervous, and I think their appetites were somewhat disturbed. I told our cook to put up a piece of whatever cold meat there was, and some bread—enough to make a good lunch for all of us; and I took, on my own account, a flask of brandy. Then we started, and rode at a good pace—at the same time being careful to preserve our horses—to the camp of the amazons.

When we reached there we found that the manager had

followed the spoor of the horses for a mile or more to the southward; there the ground became very hard and broken, and it was no longer possible to track the animals. He returned to the camp and waited our arrival; in fact, he came out half a mile or more to meet us.

During the ride from our camp the three of us had hardly spoken to one another, partly because the opportunities for conversation are very limited in a ride like that, and partly because each was occupied with his own thoughts.

When we met the manager we drew rein and proceeded at a walk, listening to the account of what he had done, and asking him what he suggested. He could not suggest anything except that we should ride toward the south, following the spoor of the horses as far as we could, and then continuing on in the same general direction. I was unable to add anything else, and so were Jack and Harry. We made our plans to ride to the south, and after losing the spoor we were to stretch out and zigzag along the way until we picked up the spoor again.

Just as we reached the camp Jack said:

"I have a suggestion that I think may be useful."

"What is that?" I asked.

Turning to the manager, Jack asked if the horses which the ladies rode were the most intelligent of the outfit.

"Yes," said the manager; "they were their favorite horses."

"They pet them a good deal, do they not?"

"Oh yes," said the manager, "you should see them; they are constantly petting those horses, and the animals seem much attached to them."

"All right," said Jack; "bring out the horses, put on the same saddles they had on yesterday, leave the bridles loose, and throw the reins over the horses' necks."

The horses were saddled and bridled, and brought out, in compliance with Jack's orders. We dismounted, patted the horses on the necks, and endeavored in every way we could think of to show them that we were their friends and the friends of their owners. They were a little shy of us at first, but by talking to them and petting them they quieted down, rubbed their noses against our faces, and became entirely friendly.

When this point was reached Jack said:

"Now, in our saddles again; turn those horses loose, first heading them to the south."

The horses—the loose ones—started off at a brisk trot, as if they knew perfectly well where they were going. We followed a dozen yards or so behind them; and sometimes they went at such a speed that they got a considerable distance ahead. Then they stopped, looked around at us, whinnied, and proceeded again. They seemed to be saying, as plainly as if in so many words: "Come on; we're taking you the way you want to go. We know you're going to get our owners out of trouble, and we'll lead the way."

On and on we went, till we had reeled off at least a dozen miles behind us; then the loose horses paused, and seemed to be a good deal alarmed. They no longer led the way, but appeared to yearn for our close companionship. We spread out so as to inclose them between us, and then they went along with decidedly more boldness. Every little while they stopped, snorted, and pawed the ground; and once

one of them started to run back; but he went only a short distance.

"I think we had better take hold of their bridles," said Jack; "I'm afraid they'll get a sudden scare, and start back at full speed."

Jack took one of the bridles and I the other, and then we went on in the direction indicated by the horses. The ground was open, dotted here and there with small trees, and occasionally with a large one; but the large trees were few and far between. The smaller trees were perhaps a foot in diameter, some of them with limbs close to the ground, and others with no limbs until six or eight feet above it. After a time the horses paused, and refused to go any farther; and our horses also showed signs of uneasiness.

"We're getting close to the spot," said Harry; "one of us had better stay behind with these two horses, while the others go ahead and reconnoiter."

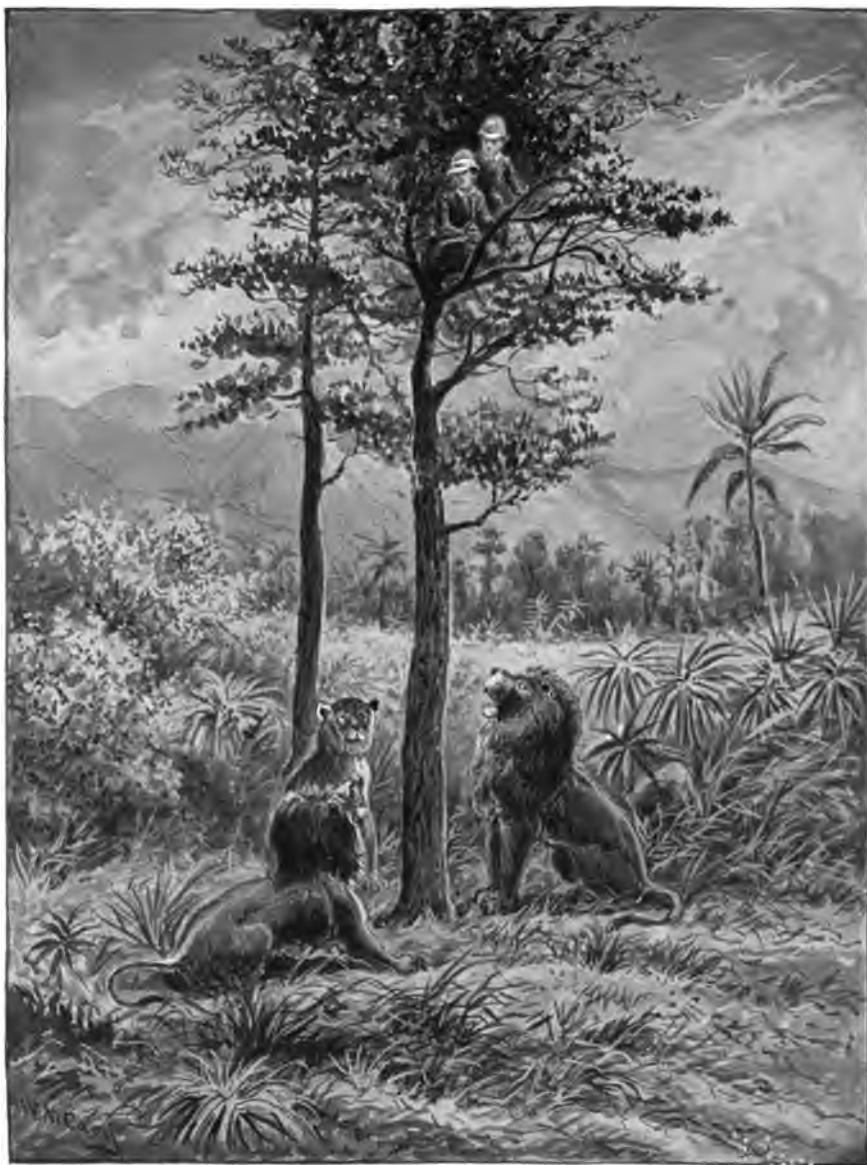
We left the horses with the manager, and we three fellows went ahead, carefully scanning the ground in every direction as we did so.

Suddenly I caught sight of something white fluttering in a tree—a small tree—perhaps a quarter of a mile away. It looked as if it might be a woman's handkerchief waved as a signal.

"There they are, boys; there they are!" I shouted; "we've found them at last!"

"There they are?" said Jack—"where?"

"Why, don't you see? Look at that tree there—that small tree between two larger ones, just the way our horses' heads are pointed."



THE ESCAPE OF THE LADIES FROM THE LIONS. Page 162.

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"Yes, there it is, sure enough!" said Jack, and at the same instant Harry made an identical exclamation.

We went forward at full speed, you may be sure. The fluttering of that handkerchief in the tree was nothing to the fluttering of our hearts—I do not make any exception for Jack's, Harry's, or mine; it was a moment of great excitement to us all.

As we neared the tree we saw tawny forms at its base; at the sound of our hoof-beats the forms rose and resolved themselves into lions, which slunk away in the direction opposite to which we had come. We rode for them, but they quickened their pace and disappeared. As soon as they did so we drew rein under the tree.

There were both the women in the limbs of the tree! They had not fainted, but both were crying, and the elder one was hysterical.

"We knew you would come," said Miss Boland; "we knew you would come; but oh, the time has been so long!"

"Of course we would come," said Jack, "just as soon as we heard of it; what else could you expect of us?"

"We were afraid you couldn't find the way," she replied, drying her tears and regaining her self-possession.

"We were guided here by your clever horses," Jack replied; "had it not been for them it would have been a very difficult matter for us to find you. But come, come down from the tree; you're perfectly safe now."

Mrs. Roberts quickly recovered herself, and then the two came down to the solid ground.

As soon as they reached it I begged them to excuse me a moment, while I rode away to call the manager with the

horses. I did not have far to go, as he had followed slowly on our track from the moment we left him. Then I rode back to the tree and joined the group.

"You must be very hungry," said Jack; "how long have you been in that tree?"

"We've been there since more than an hour before sunset—yes, nearly two hours before—and without a thing to eat or drink!"

"It was a lucky trick I brought along some brandy," I remarked, as I produced my flask; "some brandy and water will do you good."

Each of us had a bottle of water at his saddle-bow; in fact, we always made it a rule to take water along. In a very few moments the ladies were regaled with a drink, and then we brought forth our lunch and bade them satisfy their hunger.

"While you are doing so," I said, "you can make it less monotonous by telling how you came to get into that tree."

CHAPTER XXI.

RESCUING THE LADIES FROM LIONS—ON THE WAY TO CAMP— FIGHT WITH A ROGUE ELEPHANT.

"It's a very short story," said Miss Boland. "We halted under this tree for a little rest, as we had been in the saddle for some time; we had no luck in hunting, all the game keeping a long distance away from us. When we reached this point we decided to turn back, and before doing so thought we would give the horses and ourselves a little rest.

"We were lying on the ground, and our horses were grazing a little distance away, when suddenly they gave a start and fled like the wind.

"Of course that brought us to our feet, and we looked around to see what had startled them. Coming straight toward us we saw three lions—and big ones they were, too. Our impulse was to spring into the tree, the lower limbs just affording us a chance to catch them and swing up. We left our rifles lying on the ground, but got into the tree safely. Oh, if we had only been able to take one of those rifles with us, we would have made short work of those fellows! The lions didn't seem to think it worth their while to pursue the horses; they stopped beneath the tree, and stayed there until you drove them away just now. And that's the whole

story. They kept up a snarling and growling all night to let us know they were there, and there they have been ever since the horses went away from us."

By this time the manager had arrived with the horses; and when we told the ladies how the intelligent animals had shown us the way to rescue them, they hugged and petted the creatures as though they had been sisters who had just arrived after ten years' separation. I think Jack and Harry would willingly have been transformed into Miss Boland's horse for the sake of the caresses it received. The horses seemed delighted to find their owners again, and manifested their joy by little whinnies, and in other equine ways.

When the caressing of the horses had ended, Miss Boland referred again to the cause of their imprisonment, and said she was surprised at the persistence of the lions in staying near them so long. "I never knew," said she, "that lions were so keen after the human race; I thought their preference was for quadrupeds."

"So it is," I answered; "at least as a general thing. When lions come into one's camp they are usually in search of oxen or horses, and don't disturb human beings unless the latter happen to be in their way; but occasionally there is a lion which has tasted human flesh, and learned how easily a man can be overpowered and killed; and learned also, at the same time, that a man's flesh is excellent eating. Such a lion is apt to disdain, from that time forth, the pursuit and capture of quadrupeds; in fact, he becomes a man-eater."

"I've heard of man-eating tigers," said Mrs. Roberts, "but I don't know that I ever heard of man-eating lions."

Oh yes, now you speak of it, I think Cumming mentions them in his book."

"Man-eating lions are mentioned by Cumming and some other writers," said Jack, "but they are not very prominent. Now, referring to your case, the probabilities are that one or two, and perhaps all three, of those lions that chased you into the tree were man-eaters. The fact that they stayed by and watched so long would confirm that belief; of course it is just possible that they were after the horses, and not yourselves; but as the horses ran away and you were left behind, they took whatever fate had in store for them."

"I hope you slept well in the tree," said Harry, "though the accommodations were rather poor for a night's lodging."

"Slept well!" said Mrs. Roberts. "We didn't either of us close an eye during the night; and I don't believe any one of you three could have slept had you been in our places."

Harry admitted the probable correctness of her surmise, and after a little more jocularity, to enable the ladies to forget their recent horrible predicament, the lunch being finished, we suggested a return to the wagons. The proposition was accepted, and in a few minutes we were in the saddle and away.

We reached the camp of the ladies without any incident worthy of note, and glad enough they were to be at home again. All their followers were out to greet them, and the manifestations of joy were quite in keeping with the Kafir character. They shouted and yelled and danced, and if etiquette and custom had permitted, they would have embraced their employers with tears of joy in their eyes. Mrs. Roberts suggested that we should remain with them for lunch-

eon; but we excused ourselves by telling a few polite falsehoods, and went back to our own camp. We felt that they would prefer to be left to themselves for the rest of the day, as they had been under a great mental strain, and ought not to be submitted to the fatigue of entertaining visitors.

On our way back to our own camp we paid no attention to hunting, chiefly for the reason that we were not properly equipped for it. We had brought, in addition to revolvers, our light rifles only, which would have done good work with small game, but were quite unsuited to elephants or buffaloes. We saw a herd of elands three or four miles away—at least we supposed them to be elands, though we were not near enough to make them out. When within about a mile of camp we saw an elephant—and a big one he was—standing under a large tree fully half a mile distant from any other protection, the nearest trees being the forest that skirted the river.

Of course we were all eager to go in pursuit of that beast, and hurried on to camp as fast as we could. I was the first to see the elephant, and therefore the choice of first shot was given to me. I took my heaviest rifle, buckled my cartridge-case around my waist, and started in the direction of the elephant, Mirogo and Kalil following, with instructions not to keep too close to me—an instruction which they were very likely to obey; in fact, I think they would have preferred to remain in camp and hear about the hunt later. Harry and Jack kept about a quarter of a mile behind me, ready to bear a hand in case of necessity.

The beast was there just as we had left him, not having moved a yard. Not another elephant was in sight, and I

speedily made up my mind that the creature was what is called a "rogue." Perhaps you do not know what a rogue elephant is. Well, he is an elephant that for some reason—nobody knows why—has become separated from his herd, and is not allowed to rejoin it. Should he seek to come into any herd of elephants, all will turn upon him and drive him away. He seems to be an outcast, like a man who has been cut by all his acquaintances and is positively forbidden to enter decent society anywhere. All the other elephants seem to know him, and shun him. When elephants are driven into a corral and captured, if a rogue happens to be among them, the captives, while caressing and condoling with one another, keep as far as possible away from the unfortunate pariah.

Whether his temper has been injured by this treatment, or whether the treatment has been caused by his bad temper, I am unable to say; but certain it is that the rogue elephant is far more vicious than the herd elephant. In cultivated regions, where the elephants sometimes destroy the gardens of the natives by coming in the night and eating up growing things, a rogue elephant will do ten times as much damage as any other; and when it comes to fighting, he will fight as long as breath remains.

Fully convinced that the animal which I was after belonged to the rogue species, I approached him with great caution. I was careful in getting to leeward of him, to prevent his catching my wind; and it so happened that a leeward position placed the trunk of the tree between me and the creature's head. There was an advantage and a disadvantage in this. The advantage was that he could not sight me,

while there was this disadvantage—that I was cut off from my favorite shot. The reader already knows that my favorite place for planting a heavy bullet in an elephant is between the eye and ear. I was cut off from this by the tree, and the next best shot I could get was behind the shoulder.

My horse entered into the spirit of the business very well; he saw the elephant and knew what I was after. I had some difficulty in repressing in him a desire to snort, which would have aroused the game at once and revealed his danger. I patted him on the neck and encouraged him, and he kept on until I was within about thirty-five yards of the tree.

I dismounted, took steady aim just back of the fore-shoulder, and fired. Then, without waiting to see the effect of my shot, I sprang into the saddle; my horse whirled as if on a pivot, and darted away as fast as his legs could carry him.

The elephant's being behind the tree, and obliged to turn to come out from beneath it, gave me a little start, but not much. I think that just about as my horse began his flight the elephant started on in pursuit. He trumpeted viciously. I looked back over my shoulder, and saw his trunk elevated in the air, and the animal coming on at full speed. The ground at this point was pretty nearly level, and comparatively free from bushes or other growths. Glancing back every few moments, I could see that the elephant was gaining on me, and I must try some sort of tactics to escape him.

An eighth of a mile or so away to the right there was a little hill; I pulled on my bridle-rein and made for the hill. "If I can get to that hill all right," I said to myself, "I'll have this old brute in a box."

I reached the hill, and as I went up the elephant lost distance. In an uphill chase a horse, even with a rider, can outrun an elephant; but when it is a downhill race the elephant has the best of it.

When about half-way up the hill I checked my horse a little, so as to let my pursuer get nearer. Then I turned and went around the hill, the elephant following me. A side-hill is not a good place for a man to run upon, nor is it good for horse or elephant; but it is much worse for the elephant than for either of the other two.

My horse made very good time going around the hill, but not so the elephant. His legs were so short in proportion to his body that it was very difficult for him to brace himself. He screamed with rage, evidently realizing the predicament into which he had been drawn. I reduced my speed, bringing the horse to a halt, and then I took shot after shot at my pursuer, vainly endeavoring to hit the one spot in the front of his head where he is vulnerable. I turned and faced him, letting him come within twenty yards of me, then gave him another shot, and turned my horse down the hill.

It was the elephant's turn to think he had me now, as he whirled and followed at a great rate. Before reaching the foot of the hill I turned my horse quickly to one side, and the elephant, unable to stop, went crashing by me, giving me a chance to plant a couple of bullets behind his shoulder.

Then I wheeled and went a little way up the hill, and next made a quarter-turn to go around it again. There were places on the hill which were steeper than others, and I led my pursuer into the worst spots I could find. One of them was altogether too much for him, his legs on one side being

so much heavier than those on the other that he lost his balance, rolled over on his side, and kept on rolling and sliding till he reached the bottom of the hill. If he had been an ordinary herd elephant I think he would have given up at this point, and made off as fast as he could; but with his unusually ugly disposition he was not discouraged at the mishap, but resumed his pursuit of me as soon as he got to his feet.

I may remark by the way that not only is the elephant an unwieldy beast on a side-hill, but a loaded one is very unwieldy when ascending a steep hill. Of course we do not have loaded elephants in Africa, where the animal is not domesticated; but in Asia they are a very common sight. It has happened, and by no means infrequently, when troops have been marching in the mountain regions of India with their heavy baggage carried on the backs of elephants, that the huge beasts have tumbled over backward while ascending steep hills. Observe the next elephant you see in a menagerie, or look at the picture of one, and you will see that his hind legs have a bent and weak appearance, which makes them, at least to the eye, shorter than the forelegs. With his weak hind legs, and a large portion of his body lying aft of his waist, the poor creature has all he can do to keep from going over when ascending a steep incline without any burden whatever. Place a heavy load upon his back, and his equilibrium is gone.

CHAPTER XXII.

HUNTING HIPPOS AND CROCODILES—THE LADIES MISSING AGAIN— CONJECTURES AS TO THEIR FATE.

THE elephant turned and came up the hill again, and as he did so I dismounted and waited for his coming. I let him advance to within less than twenty yards, when I planted a steel-pointed bullet right in the center of his forehead, and laid him low. He fell directly forward, and then his huge body settled toward the base of the hill and rolled partly over.

I remained where I was, with my rifle ready, until my friends came up in response to the waving of my handkerchief. Mirogo and Kalil had watched the performance throughout, and although they were on foot they reached the hill in advance of Harry and Jack, who were on horseback.

My prize was a large one, but, unfortunately, one of his tusks had been partly broken off, probably in an encounter with another elephant. We saved both the tusks, and his feet were cut off and taken home for cooking-purposes. It did not seem to me that the flesh of this elephant would be very tender eating, and I did not try to save any part of it. The Kafirs, however, took a goodly supply, and the rest went to the lions, jackals, and hyenas.

We rode home slowly, and on the way discussed the possibilities of any more elephants being in the neighborhood. The presence of this rogue elephant was indicative of the absence of others, as the rogues are generally far away from the herds. We concluded that we would not go in pursuit of elephants, but turn our attention to the hippopotami, for whose benefit the boat had been constructed.

After breakfast the next morning we went to the river, armed and equipped for hunting hippos. I remained on shore, as I had done at our last hunt, but with this difference: I did not sit down at the edge of the river and go to sleep where the crocodiles could have an easy chance at me, but kept along the bank of the stream, watching my friends in the boat, and for chances to assist them.

Below the spot where I came so near becoming the prey of the crocodiles, the river widened considerably, but was quite shallow. Harry and Jack, with two of the men and a supply of hippopotamus-spears, drifted silently upon the water, with their weapons in readiness. A large hippo came along, and his curiosity was excited by the strange object on the surface of the water. He paddled himself alongside, and when in a good position Harry darted a harpoon into his back. Of course the creature sank at once.

The boat was quickly paddled to the shore, the rope of hippopotamus-hide being paid out as it came along. Then the end of the rope was tossed to where I stood accompanied by a dozen Kafirs. I seized it instantly and passed it over to the men.

They hauled away like good fellows, keeping a steady pull on the rope, which gradually shortened, showing that

the animal was being dragged along the bottom. By and by they brought him up so that he raised his head above the water and made a dash at us. I was ready for him, and with two or three well-planted bullets made an end of his onset. Then a rope was passed around the body of the beast, and he was hauled on shore for dissection.

We did not wait to dissect him then, however, but went on farther down the stream, well knowing that it was no use hunting any more in that immediate locality for that day at least. We went down fully half a mile, the boat drifting slowly with the current, or getting, now and then, a stroke or two from one of the paddles, which were handled very skilfully and silently. In due time another hippo was secured in the same way as the first, and brought to land. He was smaller than the other, and was despatched with a lance, and without the necessity of shooting. Consequently less disturbance was made, and we did not have to go so far to secure our next beast. We saw a good many crocodiles, but did not waste ammunition on them; they are of no earthly use to anybody—at least not to any white man. The natives eat their flesh, and would be very greatly pleased if we would slaughter a crocodile or two every day for their benefit.

And this reminds me that one day, just before sunset, I killed a crocodile on the river-bank, at least a hundred feet away from the water. He had gone up there in pursuit of some small animal, as crocodiles frequently do. I had a good chance at him, and killed him with an explosive bullet; he was dead as the proverbial door-nail, and when I reached camp I told the negroes about it, and suggested that they

could go in the morning and bring away whatever they liked.

"No crocodile there to-morrow morning," said Mirogo.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Other crocodiles pull him into river," was the reply; "he no be there in morning."

Sure enough, when they went there next morning there was not a vestige of the saurian to be seen; his friends had come in the night and carried him away. Whether they were moved by affection to do so I am unable to say; certainly the crocodile is not credited with affectionate feelings—at least, not for any race other than his own. Crocodiles appear to live peacefully enough together, and they also get along with the hippos without any apparent trouble; but I fancy that many a young hippo finds a resting-place in the stomach of its scaly neighbors.

We got back to camp a little past noon, with good appetites for the luncheon which the cook had provided. After lunch we went in pursuit of giraffes, elands, or anything else that might come in our way; and somehow that way led us in the direction of the camp of our female friends. Nobody suggested riding in that direction, but the impulse seemed to be universal.

We found the ladies at home, and received a cordial welcome. They had quite recovered from the excitement of their night in a tree-top in company with lions, and seemed quite willing to take the hunting-field again at any time. Mrs. Roberts said that, whatever they did, they would not go in exactly that same locality again; but I told her it was not at all likely that those lions would be found there. "Lions

range about a good deal," I said, "and the beasts which kept you in that tree-top may be dozens of miles away from there by this time. However, I don't think that is a particularly good hunting-ground, as there is not generally much other game where lions abound."

It was arranged that two or three days later, whenever they should send us word, we would join them in a hunt of some kind, meantime keeping a sharp eye out for whatever might put in an appearance. They said they were going on a little excursion on their own account the next day, but did not say where it was.

We remained at their camp a half-hour or so, and then rode away. We were not fortunate enough to find anything that afternoon, or, at any rate, anything we could capture, and so our entire day's sport was limited to the hippopotami.

The next day we followed up the hippopotamus-hunt with very good success. Jack's boat was admirably well adapted for its purposes, and proved to be a very comfortable craft. We did our hunting leisurely, and as the process was the same as on the previous day, I will not waste time in describing it. We were pretty tired when night came, and after a hearty supper slept very soundly.

We slept so soundly, in fact, that we did not hear the growling and roaring of some lions outside the camp until the manager came and waked us. We were up in a moment, in the hope of getting a shot at the brutes; but after hanging around for half an hour or so without getting a sight of them—although we could hear them distinctly—we gave it up and went back to bed. Before doing so, however, we

fired two or three shots in the air, or at places on the ground where we fancied we saw anything moving, thus intimating to the prowlers that it would be well for them to keep at a respectable distance.

We were seated at breakfast the next morning, and making good headway with our damper and stewed hippopotamus, when we were interrupted by our manager. He came to announce that the after-rider from the ladies' camp had just come with the news that they were missing again.

"Missing again!" said Jack, as he sprang to his feet; "I hope it isn't lions this time."

"I hope so, too," said Harry, as he imitated Jack's movements, and in his precipitation dropped a cupful of coffee, which went splashing over the table.

"I'll bet it isn't lions," said I; "but it's something equally serious. Let's finish our breakfast and be off." Then I turned to the manager and told him to have our horses saddled at once.

"There's no need of all three of us going," said Jack; "Frank and I will be sufficient, and you"—addressing Harry—"had better stay here and watch camp."

"I was just going to propose the same thing," said Harry—"that Frank and I would go and help the ladies out of their trouble, if they can be found. There are only two of them, and two of us ought to be quite sufficient for recovering them, if they are in a predicament such as they were in the other day."

They argued the point with a good deal of vehemence, each insisting that the other should remain at camp, and that I should accompany the one of them who went to the rescue.

...

It was plain as day, the whole situation: they were jealous of each other, but not of me!

Finally, just as we were concluding breakfast, the subject was referred to me for arbitration, and I was placed in an awkward predicament. I got out of it, though, by suggesting that I would be the one to remain at camp, and that Harry and Jack should start at once on the expedition.

"I agree with you," I said, "that two are sufficient for the purpose; and as I know you would prefer the expedition to loitering about the camp all day, and perhaps longer, you had better go."

The result of my turning the tables on them in this manner was that they both agreed that I ought to accompany them, which I did; and in a very few minutes after breakfast we were off across-country to the camp of the ladies. There we learned that they had started away about the middle of the forenoon in a southwesterly direction, accompanied by the fore-looper, who carried their rifles and extra ammunition. They told the manager that they would take a turn off to the southwest, and expected to be back by nightfall. They had not returned; neither had the fore-looper, nor any of the horses.

"They have their horses with them," I remarked, "and therefore cannot be in such a terrible predicament as they were the other day. On the other hand, having their horses and the fore-looper, it would appear that something serious has happened, since none of them have come in."

"Yes," said Jack, "it's no trivial matter, whatever it is. Perhaps they've been captured by a band of hostile natives; didn't you say there was one living in that direction?"

"Yes," I answered, with a good deal of alarm in my voice; "there's a petty chief, or king, as he calls himself, off in that direction, who is not at all friendly to white men. If they go into his country to hunt he either orders them out at once, or makes them pay very dearly for the privilege. I don't think his boundaries are within twenty-five or thirty miles of here, but there's no telling how far the ladies would ride; and, on the other hand, the king may have sent out a marauding-expedition that took them in."

"In case we find them—" said Jack, and then he paused.

"In case we find them," echoed Harry, "we'll go straight to his kraal and compel him to give up the captives. Isn't that so, Frank?"

"Yes," I replied, "in a general way that's so."

"What do you mean by 'a general way'?"

"Well, I mean this: bear in mind we are three white men, well armed, and capable of doing a good deal of fighting; but three of us, with all our weapons, might be over-matched on reaching his kraal, as we would be liable to be beset by two or three hundred natives, armed with spears, knob-kerries, and other native weapons. The odds in numbers would be terribly against us; and though we made every bullet tell, they would still have a large majority on their side after our ammunition was exhausted. It may be a case where diplomacy will be much more to our advantage than to pitch in and fight at once."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE RESCUING-PARTY—A STARTLING DISCOVERY—CAUGHT IN A CLOUD-BURST.

JACK and Harry agreed with me, and then the former remarked that we had better be on our way.

We carried a supply of food and water, and, as on the previous occasion, I had the forethought to take my brandy-flask. We took our bearing by compass toward the southwest, and for some distance were able to follow the spoor of the horses. The ground was dry and hard, and in many places the spoor was so indistinct that we frequently lost it; but by keeping the same direction we were generally able to pick it up again, and we did so without losing much time on the way.

Seven or eight miles from camp we came upon traces of a shower of rain the previous day; and as there were no signs of any spoor of horses upon it, we concluded that the shower must have fallen after our friends passed along. The country was open and undulating; there were clumps of bushes here and there, occasional patches of trees, and occasionally a solitary old tree standing alone, like a sentinel. Over a considerable part of the country there were numerous ant-hills; not the ordinary ant-hill of England or the United States, but a conical mound six or eight feet in height, erected by

the labor of its tiny inhabitants, and so firmly built as to resist the effects of the weather.

We saw a few koodoo, elands, and other animals of the antelope order, but we had no time to go in pursuit of them. We held on in the general direction in which we had started, keeping a sharp eye out everywhere for anything which might guide us toward the objects of our search. The undulations of the plain increased; and after a time, as we crossed a ridge, we saw before us a valley of great width, and stretching out to right and left as far as the eye could reach. The valley was at least a mile wide, and to our surprise we saw what appeared to be a river or lake in the middle of it.

We drew rein on the crest of the ridge, to hold a consultation and determine what next to do.

"They can't very well have gone beyond this body of water," said Jack, "unless they made a wide detour, one way or the other, to flank it."

"No, I can't see how that is possible," I answered; "and, furthermore, it would be a very rash proceeding for them, as it would carry them much farther from their camp than it would be judicious for them to go. What do you think about it, Harry?"

"I really don't know what to think," was the reply; "I'm puzzled; but we sha'n't do any good by standing here. Let's ride on into the valley, and down to the edge of the water. Perhaps we may find something there that will give us information, or, at any rate, will hint to us what we want."

We acted upon Harry's suggestion, and rode on into the valley. Everywhere around us were the indications of a

heavy rain—one of those tremendous downpours peculiar to the tropics all the world over. South Africa has its share, some parts being more favored than others; in fact, the rainfall is very unevenly distributed in that country, some portions getting much more than they want and others much less. With an even distribution of rain, South Africa would be a far more fertile country than it is.

A short distance before we reached the lake we caught sight of two buffaloes that were having a good time wallowing in a large puddle of mud and water. That is one of the buffalo's amusements: nothing delights him more than a wallow in the mud; and the more he can cause the stuff to adhere to his skin the better he seems to be satisfied.

When we reached the water's edge we noted the indications of the banks, and saw that the lake was of very recent formation. There did not seem to be any current to it, the water was very muddy, and there was not the slightest sign of any ripple in the sand on the shore, nor was there any streak of debris piled up there.

"I have it, boys," I said: "there has been a heavy rain, and perhaps a cloud-burst, just beyond here. Twenty-four hours ago this was as barren and dry as the plain that we have just crossed; the water has come in here with a rush and filled this up. Now the chances are that our friends had gone on beyond here before the rain and cloud-burst, and can't get back."

"Yes, that may be," said Harry; "but they could send the fore-looper to outflank the water somewhere and get away to camp."

We were intently regarding the water where it came in

contact with the earth, and did not look up for some minutes. At length we raised our eyes and glanced over the water, which was perhaps half a mile across. Over toward the other shore we saw a little island, rounded on the top, and fairly well covered with trees. Our gaze naturally rested on this island, and as it did so we saw the flutter of something white upon it, exactly as we had seen the fluttering in the tree when the lions stood at its base.

Jack was the first to catch sight of the waving object; as he did so he flung his arms in the air, and said:

"There they are! There they are!"

We watched, and saw a repetition of the signal, and then we answered it with the best handkerchief that could be mustered in the party. We waved our hands and made all the demonstrations we could; and now the question arose how we could help them out of their trouble.

They led their horses out in front of the trees in such a way that we could see they were all there, and at the same time each of the three individuals was in full view. This assured us that no calamity had happened to them other than imprisonment in a storm.

"It is a pretty long job," said Jack, "to wade or swim this water with our horses; and besides. there is the chance of crocodiles."

"I don't think there are any crocodiles here," I replied, "in this lake, which was probably formed since yesterday noon; but of course there's a possibility that some may have been brought down from a permanent lake or stream where they've been living. I confess that I don't exactly like the idea of undertaking to go through this water on horseback,

or without a horse. If there should be a crocodile here, and he should take a notion to breakfast on one of us, it would be good-by to any more hunting in this life."

Jack looked suddenly around in the direction where we had seen the buffaloes wallowing in the mud. "Come on," he said; "I've got it. We'll shoot those buffaloes; I'll make a boat of their skins, and we'll paddle out to them!"

The idea seemed a good one, so Jack and I gave our horses to Harry to hold, while we stalked up close to the buffaloes and finished both of them. Then we out with our knives and skinned the beasts; or rather I did most of the skinning, while Jack went into a bunch of trees close by and cut some poles similar to those he had used in making his boat at our camp. It is unnecessary to describe how he did it, as the description would be practically a repetition of what the reader already knows. Within less than an hour we had made a small boat from the skins of those two buffaloes and the framework which Jack had set up. We made paddles by taking forked sticks and binding leaves across the intersection of their branches, so that they made a fair imitation of the blade of a paddle. The boat was not as large nor as handsome as the one Jack had previously made, but it answered its purpose admirably, and what more could be asked?

Jack took the provisions we had brought along, and the flask of brandy; there was no need of taking water, as there was more than a sufficient amount all around us. I promptly, and Harry reluctantly, conceded that Jack should be the Christopher Columbus of this expedition, and as soon as he had collected his cargo he started. Then the handkerchiefs

on the island waved more rapidly than ever, and I could see that he would receive a warm welcome. Harry was rather sulky over the state of affairs; but he said nothing, for the reason, probably, that the situation was such that he had nothing to complain about.

Jack reached the island in safety, and from all we could observe he was received like a messenger of salvation. His first act was to hand over the provisions to the famishing party, not forgetting the flask of brandy which I had sent along. During the repast, which was not especially hurried, Jack learned from the lips of the ladies the story of their misadventure.

"This lake which you now see," said Mrs. Roberts, "was not here yesterday when we came. There's a depth of thirty or forty feet all around us; it shoals somewhat over toward the side where you came, but there is depth enough all around for anybody to swim. We came down into the valley yesterday, thinking we would cross over to the opposite side and then turn back again, just about making the length of our day's excursion. This island that we are now on is a hill in the midst of the valley—or was so yesterday.

"When we got to the other side of the valley, and were turning back, the rain came on. We had noticed a thunder-cloud off in the west, but didn't think it would amount to much. Five minutes before the rain came on us the sky was clear overhead, or at least partially so. The first outburst was tremendous, and drenched us completely. I suggested that we should take shelter among the trees on this hill, and so we rode our horses up here and got the best shelter we could.

"The rain kept on coming, fiercer and fiercer, for an hour or more; then it slackened somewhat, but only for a little while. All around us we could see patches of water covering the ground, but nothing at all like what there is here now.

"By and by the rain ceased entirely, the clouds seemed to blow away, and the sun struggled to make its appearance; but away among the hills to the west we could see that the clouds were very dense and hanging close to the ground. We had observed that condition of affairs some time before the rain came upon us, and remarked that they were having quite a storm over there, fifteen or twenty miles away.

"We were just getting ready to start back for our camp when we heard a rushing, roaring sound, somewhere up the valley. It was more like the sound of a railway-train than anything else I can describe, and certainly a very unusual sound in a country where there are no railways at all.

"We stood and looked in that direction, wondering what was coming; and before long we found out!

"A wall of water, ten or fifteen feet high, came pouring down and filling the whole valley. On and on it came, rushing like a torrent, and filling up all the space around us. Our hill became an island, with a depth of water around it enough to float a small steamboat!"

"Were there any wild animals caught in the flood and brought down by it?" queried Jack.

"Yes," said Mrs. Roberts, "there were a goodly number. There were several buffaloes, two or three elephants, and there were antelopes, elands, leopards, and I don't know what else. Come around here and I'll show you what came

to us. The most of the animals were driven past us by the flood, and some made the shore and escaped ; some, I am sure, were drowned, and a few took to our island for safety."

By this time they were at the other side of the island, and a sight was revealed which made Jack's eyes bulge out with astonishment. A leopard, a lion, and a boa-constrictor had taken refuge upon the little island where the ladies were! Miss Boland said that neither the leopard nor the lion manifested any hostility toward them, being so overcome with fear. "They were terribly frightened," said she, "and very much exhausted by their efforts at swimming. They came on the island almost together, and lay down where you see them without appearing to recognize each other's existence."

CHAPTER XXIV.

UNPLEASANT COMPANY—RESCUING THE CASTAWAYS—SHOOTING LIONS AT NIGHT—MISS BOLAND'S MENAGERIE.

"I WANTED to try an experiment with them," continued Miss Boland, "and see if they had not been completely tamed by their experiences; but Mrs. Roberts remarked that it was no time or place for experiments of that sort, and our best policy was to kill them before they got over their fright. So we shot them, and we walked up to within four paces of them to do so. They dropped down so peacefully that I rather think they liked being shot."

"How did you manage with the boa-constrictor?" queried Jack.

"Oh, we shot him too," said Miss Boland; "he was all used up with swimming, and was an easy prey to us. We fired at him simultaneously, putting two bullets through his head. He twisted about a great deal, but did not need any more shooting."

The experiences of the ladies with these wild animals, alarmed as they were by the feshet, is corroborated by that of other travelers in Africa, and also in other countries. Winwood Reade tells about being in Senegambia during a time of flood. He said his party, which was traveling by

boat, came to a small island in the river; and on this island there were lying, huddled together, two lions, a leopard, some monkeys and hyenas, two antelopes, and a wild boar. They killed all of these animals without difficulty. None of them took to the water; the leopard and the monkeys made an attempt to escape by running up a tree.

I have a friend who was on a hunting-expedition on the island of Saugor at the time of the great cyclone at Calcutta, twenty odd years ago. Saugor Island was flooded, and my friend was forced to climb into a tree for safety. A tiger—a full-grown Asiatic tiger—sought shelter in the same tree, and for more than twenty hours tiger and man remained there, neither molesting the other. My friend had dropped his rifle in his haste to save himself from drowning, and therefore was unable to make any demonstrations against the tiger. As for the latter animal, he was so overcome by fear that all his natural ferocity was gone.

But to return to the castaways. The question now was how to get them off the island. They were all agreed that there was practically no danger from crocodiles; but at the same time there was a lingering fear that some might have come down the valley in the freshet, just as lizards come down with the rain. Jack suggested that the best plan would be for one of the ladies to get into the boat with him, and be brought over to the shore where we were standing. The boat could carry only two persons, and thus two trips would be required before both of them could be brought over. The fore-looper would follow in the third and last trip of the boat, and he would lead one horse, allowing him to swim through the water; and when the other two horses

found they were to be left alone on the island, they would take to the water and follow.

This was exactly what happened, and in due time all were safely ferried over. All the party that had spent the night on the island presented a very dilapidated appearance, as there was no shelter save what the trees afforded, and there are very few trees in the world that can keep out an African rain. But though dilapidated in appearance, they were in good spirits; and now that their mishap was over, were ready to laugh about it, and thought it was not so bad after all.

"We were not as frightened," said Mrs. Roberts, "as we were when the lions had us up that tree; but I am frank to say we were by no means easy in our minds. There was the uncertainty as to what height the waters would attain, and until we found that they had ceased rising we were in quite a state of alarm."

While Jack was busy with his work of rescuing the castaways, Harry and I had hunted around for the driest wood we could find; and we had no easy task of it, I assure you. We built a fire, on which we cooked the tongues of the two buffaloes; so that when the party had been ferried over to our side we had a hot lunch ready for them. They were not particularly hungry, having eaten the cold meat which Jack took to them; but a hot buffalo-tongue, fresh from the coals, is a delicacy which no one can refuse in South Africa, unless he has just gorged himself in imitation of an anaconda. We had a substantial feast all around, and then we mounted our horses and rode at a good pace to the ladies' camp.

We made very good time on our return-journey, as we

did not stop to do any hunting on our way. We saw a herd of giraffes at quite a distance, and some scattered gemsbok and other members of the antelope family; but it was not considered worth while to pursue them.

When we reached the ladies' camp it was the intention of the three men of the party to leave immediately for their own wagons; but the manager told us that the cook had an ample lunch prepared, and, as the ladies urged us to stop, we did so, frankly telling them that we would consider it no breach of hospitality if they left us to ourselves.

Mrs. Roberts thanked us for our thoughtfulness in their behalf, and said that both she and Miss Boland would take advantage of our suggestion and excuse themselves; but before doing so they arranged to come to our camp the next day and go in pursuit of hippopotami. "We have not yet hunted hippos," said Mrs. Roberts, "and I'm sure the sport will be very interesting."

We finished our meal, and then went home. It was too late in the day to think of anything like hunting, and so we busied ourselves with a few preparations for the affair of the next day.

Jack was in great glee, and Harry correspondingly depressed, over the subject of the boat; as the craft was of Jack's design and construction, the honor and pleasure of accompanying our guests would be his, while Harry and I would be obliged to take a back seat. Harry felt so ugly about it that he suggested, privately, to me a wish that the boat could be smashed all to smithereens. I evaded the subject, and endeavored to divert his thoughts by asking what a smithereen is, and whether it is something to eat, wear,

or play with. This set him laughing, and he forgot his jealousy, at least for the moment.

One of our oxen died just about nightfall, and we had his carcass dragged out of the kraal and put on a ridge where it would afford a good chance for shooting. There was a hollow at one side, and a person crouched in this hollow would have the carcass between himself and the sky. We went to bed soon after sunset, so as to lay in a good stock of sleep before the lions came around to make a meal from the remains of the ox.

We were tired enough to go to sleep immediately; and the lions treated us very kindly, as they did not show up until about three o'clock in the morning. Then the manager came and waked us with the information that there was a group of lions at the carcass. He could hear them distinctly, growling and snarling in their leonine way, and he thought there were several of them, judging by the noise they made.

We took our heavy rifles and crept out to the spot we had previously selected as a good firing-point. Crouching in the hollow, or rather in the hole which we had ordered the Kafirs to dig, we had a fine position—that is, fine in every way except in case the lions should conclude to attack us. In that event it would not have been a bit fine.

I was standing at the right of our line as we faced the target—that is, the body of the ox—and it was agreed that I was to have the first fire. We waited several minutes before I had a chance; then a fine large lion stood up, and I could see his entire outline against the sky beyond the ridge. We had put pieces of white paper on our guns, so as to be able

to see the foresights, and we found the arrangement worked very well. I got a good bead on the lion, and fired; he fell, but gave a tremendous roar in so doing. Whether he was killed or only wounded I was unable to say; but by the speedy cessation of the roar I thought that the former was the case.

It was Harry's turn next, and I sat down on the edge of the hole, just behind him. I think he waited a good ten minutes, and then he had a chance for a shot very much like mine, and with the same result. His animal disappeared, and there was some roaring afterward, which indicated either that he had not made a fatal shot, or there were more lions about.

Very soon it was revealed that there were more lions, or else the first ones had not received their *coup de grâce*. It was now Jack's turn, and Harry and I expressed a wish that he might bring down a lion, so as to make the honors of the affair equal. Jack watched and waited patiently, even longer than we had waited; but his patience had its reward: he got a good shot at a lion, and evidently bowled him over, as we heard no more noise in that direction. After waiting a quarter of an hour or so we went back to our tent to sleep again till morning.

When we got up and came out our eyes met a surprising sight.

As soon as it was fairly daylight our people went out and surveyed the scene of the slaughter during the night. They found two lions, dead, a little distance away from the carcass of the ox which had been used as a bait; and a very effective one it had proved. They were about returning to camp, dragging

the bodies of the lions, when they discovered a trail of blood leading off down the slope of the ridge. Following this for a quarter of a mile, they came to the body of a lioness; and a large one she was. By her side were two lion cubs—pugnacious little fellows, that snarled and bit ferociously at the men as they attempted to pick them up. The men persisted, however, and the little fellows were brought to camp in the arms of two of the Kafirs. The carcasses of the lioness and the two lions were also dragged up to the kraal, to give us an opportunity of seeing the beasts before their skins were removed. A very fine lot of game they were.

We immediately ordered the skins removed, and the carcasses dragged away to where the remains of the ox were lying, in order to give the jackals and hyenas a chance at them. As for the cubs, Jack devised a nursing-apparatus for them, by means of a beer-bottle filled with milk, and a piece of leather fastened in the mouth of it. We found the cubs did not live on milk alone, as they ate with avidity some raw meat which was given to them. They looked more like overgrown kittens than anything else I can describe. Imagine a kitten two months old as large as a good-sized cat, but retaining the kittenish appearance, and you have a good idea of these lion cubs.

Of course we had little else to look at and think of besides these cubs until our lady friends arrived. When they came the interest in the cubs increased, and exclamations of wonder and admiration filled the air. After the vocabulary of interjections had been pretty well exhausted, Mrs. Roberts asked what we were going to do with our prizes.

“Really,” I answered, “that’s a subject to which none of

us have given any thought. I don't know what we can do with them; 'twould be rather nice to take them back to the Cape, but I don't know how the market is for young lions at present. We'll keep them awhile, and will probably be tired of them soon enough."

"Wouldn't they make a good addition to Miss Boland's menagerie?" queried Jack. "I wonder how they would get along with the young rhinoceros? By the way, Miss Boland, what is the latest intelligence of your rhinoceros?"

"We have named him Rhino," replied Miss Boland, "and he has been getting along very well. His manners are not at all sociable, but he has an excellent appetite; I haven't seen the least sign of indigestion in him since he was brought to camp. We feed him on milk, which is supplied by one of the goats; and we give him a variety of green food such as the rhinoceros is supposed to live upon. Our manager says Rhino eats his weight every day, and would eat as much more if he could get it. I've been trying to get on friendly terms with him, but he doesn't seem to care for anybody or anything. One of the Kafirs has been assigned to act as Rhino's attendant, but the creature treats him with the same disdain as he treats everybody else."

"Would you like to take these cubs as an addition to your menagerie?" queried Jack.

"Oh, I'll take them with pleasure," was the reply; "a rhinoceros and two lions will make a very good start for a show—worth sixpence at least to go inside to see them; and just imagine how I can stand up before the audience and say, 'Ladies and Gentlemen: These are animals that I caught myself in Africa;' and then I can go on and tell all about

how I had a desperate fight with the lion and lioness from whom I took the cubs. I can remove my glove and show this scar—which was made by a wait-a-bit thorn—as the scar of the wound that the lion gave me. Oh, I think I shall have a splendid menagerie, and I am very much obliged to you.”

CHAPTER XXV.

LADIES HUNTING HIPPOS—MISS BOLAND OVERBOARD AMONG THE CROCODILES—DISCUSSING A CHANGE OF BASE.

I WAS very glad that Jack made the offer and enabled us to get rid of the little brutes. Harry's face was covered with frowns because Jack had got ahead of him in giving our prizes away. I do not believe we should have kept the lions many days—certainly not after leaving that place and trekking away elsewhere. A pet lion is not an agreeable companion for a gentleman, and as for taking them back to Durban in the hope of selling them, the scheme would have been ridiculous. I had no idea that the ladies would keep the creatures long, but they would certainly enjoy the possession of them more than we should have done.

After a brief halt at our camp the whole party proceeded to the river, where the hippopotamus-hunt was to take place. We left our horses half a mile or so back from the water, in the care of the Kafirs, and finished our journey on foot.

The boat was exactly where we had left it. Jack brought it around to a convenient place at the bank, and then said he could take one of the ladies with his native paddlers, but was doubtful about taking the two of them.

There was an amiable contention between our fair visitors as to which should have the first opportunity of spearing

a hippo. It was finally settled that Mrs. Roberts should take the first chance, and she thereupon stepped into the boat and followed Jack's instructions. I should have remarked before that they came, not on their side-saddles, but on their man-fashion saddles, and were habited in their hunting-costumes, which have already been described. It was a visit of work and not of ceremony, and they were dressed accordingly.

The boat pulled out into the stream, where the heads of several hippos were now and then visible, and also the heads of an equal or greater number of crocodiles. The rest of us remained on the bank, walking slowly downward, so as to keep constantly opposite the boat, which drifted with the current, aided now and then by a perfectly silent stroke of a paddle. Jack had equipped Mrs. Roberts with a hippopotamus-spear, and stood close at her side, peering over the bow of the boat.

It was some time before a good chance was presented for using the spear; several hippos came up and looked at the boat, but somehow they seemed a little wary, and did not allow their curiosity to get altogether the better of their judgment. But all things come to him who waits, and the hippos came in due time to our waiting friends. A good-sized hippo paddled up alongside the boat, and then turned, as if he would cross its bow. As he did so his back was just at the surface, and presented a splendid mark for the spears.

"Now!" said Jack to Mrs. Roberts; and she thrust the spear with all her force into the back of the amphibious animal below her. At the same time Jack launched another spear into the back of the beast, to make entirely certain that he was secure.

Then the boat was paddled rapidly to the shore, the lines attached to the spears were thrown to us, and with a dozen Kafirs trailing away with all their strength, the poor hippo at the other end had little chance. He swam and whirled about, but it was no use. Nearer and nearer he came to the shore, and when the proper time arrived a rope was passed around him and firmly fastened, and he was dragged up on the land.

Then there was more rejoicing, and congratulations all around were showered upon Mrs. Roberts. She protested that the animal was not her prize, it having been speared by Mr. Delafield. That gentleman gallantly called her attention to the rule of hunting in Africa—that the first shot is the counting one. “You threw the first spear into the hippo,” said he, “and therefore the game is yours. The spear that I threw was simply a precautionary one; but yours is just as firmly imbedded as mine, and probably would have secured him without any assistance.”

“Very well,” said Mrs. Roberts; “I won’t make any dispute about it, as I know you will all vote me down, even if I am right. Now, Miss Boland, it’s your turn.”

When everything was ready, Miss Boland stepped into the boat, accompanied, as had been Mrs. Roberts, by Jack and the paddlers. The same course was adopted as before, the boat going farther down the stream, in order to get away from the scene of the late commotion. There was the same period of watching and waiting for a hippo to come along, and the same result—that one came along in time. Miss Boland had been duly instructed as to the necessity of driving the spear or harpoon well into the flesh of the animal. When the time came to



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throw the spear she bent all her energies to it, and drove the weapon deep into the flesh of the prey at which it was aimed. In doing so she lost her balance and fell overboard into the river!

A cry of horror arose from the bank where we stood, and the faces of all of us became the complexion of marble. A woman struggling in the river! The river full of crocodiles! Can anything more horrible be imagined?

Jack gave the order for the paddlers to turn the boat; and luckily they paddled in the right direction, and whirled the craft so as to bring the bow directly over Miss Boland. Jack braced himself, reached down, and clutched her garments between the shoulders. As he did so he glanced along the water, and saw several crocodiles coming in his direction! There was no chance for deliberation or politeness; he clutched Miss Boland by the arms, and dragged her over the side of the boat and into a place of safety. It was all the work of an instant—not literally an instant, but I think not more than a minute. Miss Boland said afterward that it was all done so quickly that she had not time to get frightened, though she did think of the crocodiles while she was in the water.

The crocodiles came around the boat, and were evidently disappointed, if one might judge by their manner. As soon as the fair passenger was rescued, the boat was paddled to the shore, the line attached to the hippo being paid out as usual. The shore was reached in safety, and Miss Boland, dripping with water, stepped somewhat unsteadily to the ground. Having reached the firm earth, she threw her arms around Mrs. Roberts, and then the two of them sat down on a bunch

of reeds and fainted. They were perfectly right to do so, as the danger was all over.

The hippo was dragged ashore as the first one had been. When the ladies came to themselves they concluded that they did not want any more hippo-hunting that day. We returned to camp as quickly as we could; the ladies declined our invitation to remain for luncheon, but went to their own quarters immediately.

Of course we had a good deal to say to one another about the incidents of the day, and particularly concerning the mishap, which might have been horribly serious.

"But for your quickness, and the strength of your arms," said Harry, addressing Jack, "I'm afraid our lady friend would have been food for the crocodiles. What a horrible thought!"

"Yes, indeed," said Jack; "I'm so glad I didn't have time to think; had there been any opportunity whatever for exercising my thoughts, I'm afraid I should have been paralyzed at the situation."

"It is just possible," I added, "that the crocodiles which were swimming so rapidly toward the boat were doing so from curiosity, and not with the idea that something which they could catch was there."

"Yes, that's barely possible," said Harry; "let us suppose it was the case, and dismiss the subject; I don't like to think of it."

"Nor I," said Jack.

I added, "Nor I."

So by mutual consent we put the river and the hippos, and all incidents connected with them, out of our thoughts.

We discussed buffaloes and elephants and other game, and at length I suggested that we had better be moving from where we were.

"Why so?" queried Jack, and Harry echoed the inquiry.

"Well," I answered, "because we have used up most of the game in this neighborhood; we've had no really good shooting for several days. Killing hippos is not first-class hunting, as you know. Neither is killing lions at night; true, their skins are worth something, but not very much, and it's a kind of hunting that I don't care for particularly. Some skill is required, it is true, but I don't like the idea of concealing myself in a hole in the ground near the carcass of an animal that has been put out as bait. Of course, if any lions come along we'll take them in, but I would just as lief they would stay away.

"Now, as to moving away from here: I was thinking last night that we had better turn off to the west, where the river is much smaller than it is here, and there are plenty of good fording-places. Then we can cross it and work away to the north, until we get into what looks to be a good hunting-ground. There we can outspan and make a kraal."

Jack and Harry did not take kindly to my suggestion; they insisted that the shooting was still good enough, although they were obliged to admit that it was by no means equal to what we found on our arrival. All the time they were talking my mind was at work, and I thought I could see the reason for their wishing to remain. But I did not give any hint of what was uppermost in my thoughts, and though I held out promises of rare sport to the north of the river, I was unable to convince them. As all our move-

ments were determined by a majority vote, I was left in the lurch, and obliged to assent to remaining a while longer where we were.

The manager reported certain little repairs necessary to the wagons, and we devoted the afternoon to them. At supper in the evening we discussed our plans for the next day, and ordered runners to go out and look for elephants and buffaloes in the forests where we had previously found them. I had little expectation that any would be discovered, as it is not generally the habit of these animals to remain long in a place where they have been disturbed.

We had just finished breakfast on the following morning when our manager came to the tent with a letter in his hand.

"The post has just arrived," said he, "and I bring a letter which you gentlemen can divide among you."

I took the letter from the manager's hands, and found that it was addressed on the envelope, "Messrs. Manson, Delafield, and Lawrence. In Camp near Luranga River." It bore no postmark, and I readily perceived that it had not come through regular course of mail. Before opening it I surmised its origin.

The letter was from Mrs. Roberts and Miss Boland; or rather it was from Mrs. Roberts, as her name alone was signed to it. It announced that they had just determined to make a movement to the north, and their men were at that moment inspanning the oxen. "We don't know exactly where we shall go," the letter said, "but somewhere to the north of the river, where we can find a good region for hunting. We are greatly obliged to you gentlemen for the kind-

ness you have shown us, and should it ever be in our power to reciprocate, it will give us great pleasure to do so. Our manager says it will be three or four hours before we will be under way, and that gives us time to send this letter to you."

"Any answer?" the manager asked.

"We must send them an answer, certainly," said Jack. "Frank, sit down and drop them a note."

"Yes," said Harry, "politeness requires that we shall respond to it. By all means, Frank, write something."

Thus impelled, I opened my despatch-box and penned a hasty note, acknowledging the receipt of their missive, and hoping they would have a successful journey to the north of the river, and find an abundance of game. I added the echo of their expression of satisfaction at having met us, and also the hope that we might again be of service to them. I read it over to my friends and hastily sealed it, and despatched it by the messenger, a Kafir boy, who could travel about as fast across-country as an able-bodied horse.

After the boy had gone I remarked that it was a great pity we were to lose our neighbors.

"I don't see why we should lose them," said Jack; "let's inspan, and go in the same direction!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHANGE OF BASE—CROSSING THE RIVER—RUNAWAY OXEN—NEW HUNTING-GROUND.

"WHY, I thought you and Harry voted to remain here; didn't you?" I remarked.

"Yes," said Jack; "I did think last night that there was no use in our hurrying away, but later on I thought over what you said about the scarcity of game, and have concluded that it would be a good plan to move on."

"Yes, and so have I," said Harry; "I didn't realize the full force of your remarks last night, but I've been thinking it over, and see very plainly that we've skinned out this spot and ought to go somewhere else. I suggest that we reconsider our vote of last night, and bring the subject again before parliament."

I could not help laughing at their change of view. When my laugh was over I assumed a serious expression, and put the question to vote. Harry and Jack were as unanimous now for moving on as they were for remaining *in situ* the night before.

So the order was given for inspanning. Jack suggested that we had better send down to the river and save the boat which he had constructed. "We needn't bother about the frame," said he, "as I can get up another one. I'll go down

with the Kafirs, take the boat to pieces, and bring away the skins; the skin covering is all we want; it can be folded up and carried in a small space."

Away went Jack with three or four of the Kafirs, and in an hour or so he was back at the camp with the essential portion of his boat. The work of inspanning was rather slow; it is always much slower when you have been in camp for several or many days than when you are moving steadily day after day. We had two wagons, and nine pairs of oxen to each wagon. To yoke up eighteen pairs of oxen is no small job, even when the animals are under thorough discipline; when they are in a condition bordering on wildness it is a great deal worse.

I remember, in my younger days, on the American plains, I used to wonder why the teamsters with the prairie-schooners of those times were so fearfully profane in their talk. I did not wonder any more when I had seen them at work yoking up their teams. A man was pointed out to me once in Leavenworth, Kan., as a prodigy of goodness, because he had driven a five-yoke team from Leavenworth to Salt Lake City and back without uttering a single oath. But there was a sequel to the story: the man was deaf and dumb!

It was noon, and a little after, before we got under way. We made about six miles that afternoon, and then outspanned at the edge of the river's valley, where there was a good supply of water for the cattle, and fairly good grazing-ground. Next morning we were under way in good season; and just before the wagons started we three hunters rode on ahead, partly to spy out the land and partly to see if we could pick up any game. We found two straggling buffaloes, and

managed to shoot both of them. They were small, but welcome, and Jack rode back to the wagons to show the party the route they could take in order to pass near where the buffaloes were, and gather up the meat and the hides. We made about fifteen miles that day, outspanning again near the river's valley, and in a very good location.

Soon after going into camp we discovered a herd of half a dozen elands a mile or so to the westward. We spread out in different directions, so as to encircle them, and thereby increase our chances of bringing down at least one of the number. Harry secured one of them, and Jack another; I returned empty-handed from the chase, but I did not care much for that, as the two elands, added to the two buffaloes, gave us a plentiful supply of meat. We saw nothing of our lady friends or their wagons, and concluded that they must have gone farther to the west before crossing the river. Harry and Jack seemed to be a good deal exercised as to the direction they had taken, and I exercised them a good deal more by suggesting that after sending the note to us they had possibly changed their minds and traveled south instead of north. "You know," I added, "that it is a woman's privilege to change her mind, and what better opportunity could they have than now?"

I watched their faces as I spoke, and could distinctly see that both of them turned decidedly pale. The idea that Miss Boland could have been so deceitful as all that was something to drive the poor fellows wild with indignation. They were speechless for two or three minutes, but at last Jack broke the silence by declaring that my idea was an absurd one. He did not believe a word of it for a moment, and would not

believe it until he had positive proof. "They said distinctly," he added, "that they were going to cross the river and proceed northward, and I don't believe they would tell a lie."

"It isn't a question of lying," I said; "it is simply that of a change of mind. People don't generally call that a falsehood. Why, you yourself, Jack, the night before we received the note from them, believed in staying where we were, and said so emphatically; the next morning you changed your mind. It wouldn't be right for me to accuse you of falsehood in so doing."

Gradually the conversation took a chaffing tone, and my companions became better-tempered. We slept well, after a hearty supper, and the next morning the three of us went out to find a good place for fording the river. We found one—a place where the river was quite broad and shallow, with a good sandy bottom, and the water about four feet in depth. The manager was doubtful as to the ability of the teams to pull the wagons through; so, by way of precaution, before the first wagon entered he took five yokes of oxen from the other wagon and hitched them on in front of the nine pairs that constituted the team; then, with a great deal of shouting, swearing in half a dozen languages, and a vigorous use of whips and sticks, the team entered the water. It was no small matter to keep the leaders in the way they should go, but the fore-looper, with three or four Kafirs to assist him, managed to do so. It was a pretty hard pull, but they got through all right; the oxen wanted to stop and breathe in midstream, but that could not be allowed, as the wheels would sink in the sand, and it would be a matter of extreme difficulty to start again.

The second wagon was brought over in the same way as the first, with five yokes of oxen taken from the team of the first wagon, making fourteen yokes in all. This practice is a very common one in South African travel, just as it used to be on the American plains. Sometimes the crossings of the rivers here are so bad that it is necessary to unload everything out of the wagons, and carry it across on men's heads or in boats. In many of the rivers the bottom is rocky, being filled with boulders of all sizes. They make a very bad crossing, because they offer miserable foothold to the oxen, and are equally bad footing to men. In crossing one of these stony rivers in my first trip up-country, I slipped and fell at full length in the middle of a swift current, in consequence of having stepped on a boulder which turned under my feet. I was carrying a gun and my suit of clothes at the time; gun and clothes went into the water, but happily I saved both.

After getting safely over the river and putting everything in order, we took a course about due north, uncertain how long we would continue it. Harry, Jack, and I scoured the country ahead of the wagons in order to pick up whatever game might be in our way, and we managed to keep the party well supplied with meat.

Our company on its march was a picturesque sight. First came the fore-looper on horseback, indicating the route which the wagons should take; it is the fore-looper's duty to select the way, and he must be able to take in a considerable range of country at a single glance. Then came the wagons, each with its nine span of oxen, and behind the second wagon was the loose extra stock of oxen and horses—though gen-

erally there are no extras of the latter, all the horses in the outfit being saddled and ridden by somebody. The manager rides here and there along the line, watching and directing everything, and using very emphatic language when he has occasion to address any of his inferiors. The rear is brought up by the after-rider, whose duty it is to prevent men and cattle from straggling or from falling behind.

The reader will see that there is thus a good deal of military formality about the composition of an African train, and such is necessarily the case. The fore-looper is the advance-guard, the after-rider the rear-guard, the wagons and their teams the army, the loose stock the commissary-train, and the manager the general in command.

We found the country to the north of the river decidedly hilly—much more so than the southern side. Climbing hills was a serious matter, as it required a great deal of shouting and flogging to accomplish it. On the other hand, descending hills was nearly as bad; and when it came to accidents those of the descents were more numerous than those of the ascents. One hill that we descended came near wrecking one of the wagons. We cut down a small tree and tied it to the rear of the wagon to make a drag; then we started the oxen; but the drag was insufficient, and the wagon pushed ahead, forcing the oxen before it. They quickened their pace to a trot, and then to a run.

In going down the descent the oxen turned along the side of the hill, which brought the wheels on one side of the wagon much higher than those on the other. The wagon tipped over, or rather would have done so had it not come against a tree just as it was overturning, and brought every-

thing up all standing. The chains that held the first four yokes of oxen were broken, and away the creatures went at a tearing pace, until they were stopped by the fore-looper half a mile away.

We had a variety of mishaps while traveling in the hilly country, but happily none of them were serious. After two days of this sort of thing we came out into an open region, where the country was fairly level, but there was a scarcity of water, as the streams were small and far apart. We kept on through this open region till we came near the Divargo River; at any rate, it is called a river, though it is hardly anything more than a small brook. As the valley of the river afforded good pasturage for our oxen, and the stream itself would supply us with water, we decided to form a kraal in its neighborhood.

Signs of game were plentiful, and the natives that came into the camp reported an abundance of elephants and buffaloes. While looking about for a good place for a camp, Harry stumbled upon a fine spring of water coming out of a hillside at the edge of the valley, and of course that settled the question at once.

We outspanned there, and all hands went to work industriously to make a kraal. Not only did the natives report plenty of elephants and buffaloes, but they also reported giraffes, elands, gemsbok, blesbok, and lions. The lions were the fellows that we were obliged to build a kraal against, all the other animals named giving us a wide berth.

The next morning after forming our camp we started in on our hunting-work—first after elephants, then after buffaloes, and then after smaller game. We had very good success, as

we brought down three elephants and two buffaloes the first day, and all the elephants were good-sized tuskers.

The second day we were not so fortunate, as we secured only two elephants, the herd having become shy on account of the devastation in their midst the day before. Still, as sport goes, that was very good work, and we returned to camp in fairly buoyant spirits.

Soon after we arrived our manager came to us and said several natives had been in the camp a short time before and reported two hunters camped some five or six miles to the westward of us. He added the important information that these hunters were women, whereupon Jack and Harry took a look at the sun, to see whether there was time to ride over to the camp and back again before dark. Harry proposed that we should go at once on the visit; but I suggested that it was rather late in the day for a call, and besides, it might look like rushing matters a bit if we started out directly from our own camp with the object of visiting them.

"It would be better," I said, "to hunt in that direction, and come upon them 'by accident.' Don't you think so?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LADIES CHASED BY A HERD OF BUFFALOES—HOW THEIR
LIVES WERE SAVED—IN CAMP AGAIN—STORIES OF
BUFFALO ADVENTURE.

"No, I don't," replied Harry; "I think it would be showing a greater respect to them for us to take the trouble of saddling our horses and going purposely to their kraal, instead of ignoring them until such time as we 'happen' upon them. They will learn from the natives that we are here, just as we have learned about them."

"I agree with Harry," said Jack; "but it's too late in the afternoon for us to visit them to-day; we can start out in the morning and ride over there."

"Well, that will do," said Harry; "it certainly is rather late in the day; if we were ready to start this minute we couldn't get there and back again before dark unless we limited our call to about five minutes, and that wouldn't do."

"You may be sure it wouldn't," said Jack; "when I call upon them I don't want to be cut short on five minutes."

It was agreed all around that we should make a visit to the ladies the next morning, and with that understanding everybody was cheerful. We had a substantial supper, and went to bed early. All were up in good season the next morning, and my companions were decidedly uneasy all

the time that intervened between their waking and the saddling of the horses after breakfast. As we mounted and rode away I suggested that we had better ride slowly, as the distance was short, and we did not want to get there too early in the morning; the others assented, and we jogged on at a slow pace. We had several opportunities for shooting game while on the way, but resisted temptation, since a yielding to it would have involved loss of time. In due time we came in sight of the camp, and rode slowly up to it; the manager came forward to meet us, and informed us, to our dismay, that the ladies had taken an early start and gone out hunting.

"Which way did they go?" queried Jack.

"They went toward the northwest," replied the manager, "where the natives reported a herd of buffaloes. The after-rider went with them on horseback, and half a dozen Kafirs followed on foot. I think," he continued, "that you will have no difficulty in finding them, as they will be sure to be in the vicinity of the herd of buffaloes."

We thanked him for the information, and then rode away in the direction which he indicated. When an intervening ridge shut out the sight of the camp, we halted and held a council. I was of the opinion that we had better leave the ladies to themselves, and not interfere with their hunting for the day, but was speedily overruled by my companions, who outvoted me two to one. They had the argument on their side, I had to confess, and therefore I yielded with very little hesitation.

"They've been getting into scrapes lately," said Jack, "and the chances are even that they'll get into one to-day. If we go where they are we may be able to pull them out of

a difficulty, which we could not do if we went on in an entirely different direction. We need not interfere with their hunting at all; if they can kill the entire herd let them do so, but I imagine there won't be very much diminution of it after they have had their fill of buffalo-shooting."

As soon as the question was decided we hurried on toward the northwest. We had gone about six miles when we saw ahead of us a cloud of dust, and knew that it was the locality of the herd. The ground was open and undulating; scattered mimosa and other trees dotted the region, but they were not sufficiently numerous to afford cover or shelter to any great extent; neither did they impede the view.

"There comes the herd!" shouted Jack, as he saw the cloud of dust. "I'll bet our friends are just behind it, and having a merry time."

"The herd is coming this way at full speed," said Harry; "how rapidly that dust-cloud approaches!"

We all rose in our stirrups and looked intently in the direction of the dust; very soon I made out that the herd stretched across the plain to a considerable extent, and, according to the indications, it contained a goodly number of animals. It was certain that we would have plenty of sport without interfering with that of our neighbors.

"Stop! What is that?" I exclaimed. "Just look in front of the herd, past that mimosa-tree with a bush at its base!"

"Yes, just look!" said Jack. "My God, the hunters are being hunted!"

Sure enough, that was the case. We could see the herd of buffaloes advancing at full speed, and in front of them—



TURNING THE CHARGE OF THE BUFFALOES. Page 216.



not more than two hundred yards in advance—were three individuals on horseback, riding at a gallop away from the herd! The situation was plain: the buffaloes had charged upon the three riders, and were pursuing them to the best of their ability.

“If anybody falls, death is certain,” said Jack, “as that herd would trample the life out of one in a very few minutes. The lives of riders and horses are at stake; a single misstep, and the fall would be terrible. Let us ride forward and turn the herd, if it is possible to do so.”

We went ahead at a gallop. Very soon we passed the fleeing riders, and just as we did so one of their horses plunged his foot into a hole and fell headlong! There was no time to stop to render assistance; all depended upon heading off that ruck of infuriated animals, that was coming on with the force of an avalanche.

We shouted, and waved our hands in the air; and then, gripping our faithful Winchesters, which we had brought along, we poured shot after shot, not at the herd, but directly over it. Had we fired at the animals and wounded any of them, we should have increased their fury; firing above them was the only way to intimidate them.

Our plan was successful: the leaders of the herd slackened their speed, and then veered away to the left. The others naturally followed the course of their leaders, and in less time than it takes me to tell the story the direction of that animate tornado was changed. The speed of the herd was but little diminished, but the course was changed about a quarter of a circle, which was amply sufficient for our purposes.

Under other circumstances we should have rushed in and had glorious sport among that mass of buffaloes, but our attentions were needed elsewhere. We wheeled about and saw the group of our friends where the one mentioned had fallen, and rode as quickly as possible to the place where they were. When we reached it we found that the victim of the fall was Miss Boland; but fortunately, with the exception of a few bruises, she was not injured. Mrs. Roberts and the after-rider had turned back to her assistance as soon as they discovered her fall, believing that we would be able to turn their pursuers either to the left or the right.

Mrs. Roberts was standing over Miss Boland, the latter being in a half-fainting condition. Fortunately I had brought along the brandy-flask which has heretofore been mentioned, and was able to administer a restorative dose to the patient.

In a little while the lady was able to mount her horse, and then we rode slowly toward their camp.

Harry obtained a place by Miss Boland's side, Jack rode close behind them with Mrs. Roberts, and I brought up the rear with the after-rider as my companion. From him I learned the particulars of the affair, which were about as follows:

"We had no difficulty in finding the herd," said he, "as it was scattered over quite a bit of land, where the buffaloes were grazing. We rode directly at them, the wind being favorable to us; and when within perhaps fifty yards the ladies drew up and fired, each one selecting a medium-sized cow as her target.

"The moment the first shot was fired some of the old bulls in the herd gave a peculiar cry or bellow, which brought all

the animals together, with the exception of the two cows, that had been severely wounded and were unable to move quickly. The whole herd acted like a regiment of well-trained soldiers, all running toward the center, where these old bulls were. We thought they would try to run away, but they did not do anything of the kind; they pawed the earth and bellowed repeatedly, and then, as if by word of command, they all started straight toward us. We turned and ran, well knowing that if they once overtook us our deaths would be certain. That was the time you saw us, and you certainly saved the life of Miss Boland, if not the lives of all three. If you had been two minutes later she would surely have been trampled to death; and if our horses had fallen as hers did our fate would have been the same."

With the exception of my conversation with the after-rider, our journey homeward was a silent one. Miss Boland was unable to talk, much to Harry's disappointment, while Mrs. Roberts could do little better than answer in monosyllables to Jack's remarks.

When the party reached the kraal we assisted the ladies to dismount, and I, as the self-appointed master of ceremonies, told them to go to their tents at once, and we should see them the next day.

Miss Boland nodded assent, as she could not speak and was barely able to stand. Mrs. Roberts shook each of us fervently by the hand, and said:

"We owe our lives to you, gentlemen. Had it not been for you our fate would have been sealed. I can't say more now; good-by."

With that she took Miss Boland by the arm, and the

two disappeared. We remained a few minutes outside the kraal, talking with the manager, and then mounted and rode away to our own camp.

By the time we reached it it was past noon, and we were hungry. The cook had not expected us, and consequently had made no preparations for luncheon; but that did not trouble us much, as a few slices of meat—good-sized slices—with some bread left over from breakfast, were sufficient for us. We discussed the events of the morning, and agreed that it was no exaggeration for Mrs. Roberts to say we had saved the lives of herself and Miss Boland.

“That’s the first time I ever saw a herd of buffaloes charge in a body,” said Jack; “I’ve been told that they do so, but have never seen it.”

“I’ve seen it twice,” I replied, “and I was one of the parties they charged against in both instances. My first experience was when chasing a troop of elands; a small herd of buffaloes, with a rhinoceros or two, came after me, and I only escaped by the fleetness of my horse and by doubling upon them in a little patch of forest. They lost sight of me and gave up the chase. Evidently they don’t follow the trail by scent, but rely entirely upon the use of their eyes.”

“And what was the other occasion?” queried Harry.

“Oh, the other time I was chased was when I was up in the buffalo country last year, and it was very much under the same circumstances as the event of to-day. Two of us had attacked a herd and put some lead into the leading bulls. The bulls gave a call that brought all the others to their aid, and then they charged at full speed. At a guess there were more than a hundred buffaloes in the crowd. My

friend who was with me at the time thought there were two hundred at least. They formed into a very compact mass, and only the leaders could see where they were going.

“When they charged we were about two thirds of the way from one flank of the herd to the other. I suggested to my friend that we take the shortest cut toward the edge of the herd, and ride obliquely along the front, instead of running dead away before them. We did so, and as we reached the edge of the flank we doubled quickly around to the rear of the herd. This threw the animals into confusion, as the mass was so dense and so large that the leading bulls could not quickly make their way through it, while the cows and yearlings at the rear were not likely to lead a charge on their own account. Before the bulls got around in position to make a head against us we were safely out of reach.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MISCELLANEOUS HUNTING—SUDDEN CALL FOR HELP—THE LADIES
BESIEGED BY AN AFRICAN CHIEF—FOREIGNERS' MAGIC.

"SHALL we call on the ladies to-morrow to ask how they are, or wait until we hear from them?" Harry asked.

"Oh, we'll call on them, of course," responded Jack.

"I think," said I, "that we'll do neither. We won't disturb them by a call, and we won't neglect them by waiting till they send to us."

"Then what do you propose to do?"

"That's very simple," said I: "we'll send our manager over to ask how they are, and if it would please them to have a call from us."

"You're a diplomat of the first water," said Jack, "and have mistaken your vocation. Instead of hunting big game in South Africa, you should be representing your country in a foreign capital, where difficult questions are often arising."

I thanked him for the compliment, and explained that my desires did not run in that direction. I had been offered a diplomatic appointment, which I declined, partly because I had no taste for the life, and partly in consequence of the feeling that I was not fully adequate to the duties of the position. "And speaking of diplomacy," I added, "shall we do any hunting this afternoon?"

As I asked this question Mirogo appeared at the door of our tent and announced a herd of elephants—a small herd—about two miles to the eastward.

“There’s the answer to your question,” said Harry, as he rose from the table and reached for his rifle.

“Yes, that’s the answer,” said Jack; “no necessity for any further talking.”

In a few minutes we were off for the chase, which I will not describe, as it would be a practical repetition of previous elephant-hunts. We each bagged an animal, and all three were good ones—that is, they had good tusks.

The next day we sent our manager to the ladies’ camp. He returned with the report that our friends were pretty well recovered from the shock they had received during the buffalo-chase, and with the statement, by way of postscript, that they would be pleased to see us at any time when we chose to call. They did not think they would go out hunting for the next two or three days, and if we made a visit within that time we would be pretty sure to find them at home.

Needless to say, we made it in our way to call there the next day. We were intending to pursue the buffaloes, and had a cold luncheon with us; but they pressed us so hard that we remained to luncheon, and, in fact, remained so late that we postponed our buffalo-hunt until the following day.

We remained in that region a fortnight and more, dividing our time between hunting the various kinds of game which abounded there, calling every few days at the ladies’ camp, and receiving occasional prearranged visits from Mrs. Roberts and Miss Boland about luncheon-time. Needless to say, we

became well acquainted, and the acquaintance ripened into friendship, and, in certain quarters, into love. We arranged that the next time we made a move we would go in company and form our camps more nearly together.

I had a large map of South Africa—the best I could find in Durban—and we studied it a good deal to determine where we would next go. We also obtained all the information possible from the natives; but such information, except as concerned the immediate neighborhood, was never reliable and always exaggerated. If you ask a question of a Kafir or a Zulu, and he knows the correct answer, he may possibly give it to you; if he does not know it he will give you the first that his imagination suggests, and he generally endeavors to make it of a pleasing character.

We had about made up our minds to trek for three or four days in an easterly direction; the natives reported an abundance of game there, and their report was confirmed by some of our own people, whom we sent out on a scouting-expedition. They saw several herds of elephants and buffaloes; and as for the divers members of the antelope family, they answered the Irishman's description of the absentee landlords of Ireland: "The country was full of 'em." The question was not fully decided, but was to be at the next meeting of our friends and ourselves.

On the morning of the day when we were to take luncheon together and decide the question, the after-rider of the ladies' expedition came into our camp in great haste with a note, which he brought to me. It was addressed to all three of us by our surnames only, and had evidently been written in great haste. It said, briefly:

"Please come immediately, and bring your Winchesters. We are in peril."

The only signature to the letter was that of Mrs. Roberts. Needless to say, "there was mounting in hot haste," to use the words of Byron, and we went off at a brisk canter in the direction of our friends.

As we neared their camp we saw that it was surrounded by two or three hundred negroes, armed with spears and equipped with shields. Our hearts rose in our mouths, as we feared that our fair friends were prisoners in the hands of the natives.

"What shall we do," said Jack—"ride up slowly and parley with them, or send in our after-rider [who accompanied us] and find out what the trouble is?"

"No," I answered, "we'll ride right in among them, straight up to the wagon and the tent. We'll find out from those who can best tell us."

"Yes, that's the best way," said Harry; "no use parleying with these fellows, or they'll think we're afraid of them."

We rode right on to the kraal, straight up to the wagon and the tent. The natives pushed up against us, and we pushed them vigorously aside, dismounting instantly and giving the reins of our horses to the after-rider. It is proper to say that he was well armed and ready for his share of the fighting in case any occurred.

The manager of the camp came out as we dismounted, pushing his way with some difficulty through the crowd. As I caught sight of him I said:

"Tell the ladies we are here."

He disappeared, returned in a moment, and said they wished us to walk into the tent.

We did not wait for a second invitation, but proceeded there at once. Mrs. Roberts came to the door of the tent and shook our hands convulsively one after the other, repeating several times, "I'm so glad you've come! I'm so glad you've come!"

"What is the matter?" we all asked in a breath.

"The matter is just this," she replied: "Macatese, the chief who owns this land, came here early this morning and demanded to see us. We were both in bed at the time, and sent word to him that he could not be received. He sent back that his time was precious—as if the time of these natives ever amounted to anything—and he could not wait. We answered that he could see us as soon as we were dressed, and not before. He threatened to come into our tent, and our manager told him he would certainly be shot if he did so, and that any of his followers who invaded our tent would be killed. That seemed to frighten him, and he concluded to wait.

"We dressed as quickly as we could, and then received him. He said we had come into his lands without permission. We told him we didn't know that any permission was required, but if we had violated any of his rules we were willing to pay whatever damage was proper. Then he said that we need not pay anything, but he wanted us at his kraal—he wanted some white wives. His people had reported that two white women were hunting in his territory, and he had decided they must be his wives and form a part of his household."

The three of us stood open-mouthed with astonishment, but only for a moment; I broke the silence by asking where the chief was at that moment.

"He's in the other tent, with two of his followers, the fore-looper, who is acting as interpreter, and Miss Boland. He has been trying all his powers of persuasion to induce us to become his wives; he promises that we shall have authority over all others, and be the queens of the land!"

In spite of her indignation Mrs. Roberts could not help laughing when she reached this point in the story, and I felt a smile endeavoring to spread itself over my face. The idea of two refined, educated Englishwomen becoming the wives of an African chief was about as ridiculous a thing as I ever heard of.

"Realizing our helplessness, we decided to send word to you, and I wrote the very hasty note that you received."

"We are very glad you did so," I replied, "and I think the best thing we can do is to interview this African potentate at once. Please lead the way into the tent where he is."

Mrs. Roberts did as requested, and in a moment we stood in the presence of the chief, or king, as he was pleased to call himself. Miss Boland rose and shook us warmly by the hand, with more composure than Mrs. Roberts had shown when she greeted us. There was reason for this, however, as she had heard us talking outside the tent, and had known for several minutes of our arrival.

I had a little acquaintance with the native language, though not a great deal. It was possible for me to talk in a fragmentary sort of way, and with the aid of the fore-looper

I got along very well with his majesty; at all events, I made sure that he understood what I said. My impulse was to begin the conversation very abruptly by ordering him out of the tent and away from the kraal; but the thought arose that diplomacy might be better, and so I greeted him as amiably as was possible for me under the circumstances. He seemed somewhat disconcerted at our appearance, and this gave me an advantage.

I praised his country and the game that we had found in it, and told him we were intending to call on him that very day to pay our *hongo*, or tribute, for hunting in his dominions. He seemed pleased at the suggestion, and said he would receive us in the afternoon.

I suggested that as his residence was some twelve or fifteen miles away we might defer our visit till the next day, or possibly the day after; to which he assented. Then I invited him to come outside the tent, where I would show him some foreign magic.

The natives all over Africa are great believers in magic, and nowhere more so than in the region where we were. Everything they do not understand is at once attributed to supernatural powers, and it is this belief which has enabled foreigners to penetrate their country to the extent they have. A watch is regarded as a living thing with magical powers, and so is every piece of machinery, whether elaborate or simple. Firearms of all kinds are supposed to be of magical production, and the more effective they are and the more rapidly loaded and fired the greater is the amount of magic they contain. Mrs. Roberts had asked us to bring our Winchester, with a view to their rapid use in case of actual fight-

ing; I immediately saw, or thought I saw, a use for these weapons that she had not counted upon.

After getting Macatese outside the tent, and also outside the kraal, I called his attention to my rifle, telling him it was the newest magic of the white man. He looked at it in wonderment, and then asked me to fire it. His people meanwhile had gathered around us, and were intently watching the proceedings. There was a large tree about a hundred yards away, and I indicated that as the mark at which I would fire; then I drew the weapon to my shoulder, and fired five shots at the tree as fast as I could pump them out.

The first and second shots did not seem to startle him, as he had seen double-barreled guns fired before; but the third, fourth, and fifth shots were what may be termed, in slang, "corkers." A look of astonishment overspread his face, and if his complexion had permitted I think he would have turned pale! He was one of the most surprised Africans I ever saw.

I paused at the fifth shot, intimating to him that I could go on indefinitely, and then pointed to the weapons of my companions to show that they were of the same sort and of the same magical powers as mine. I further told him that we had a hundred such guns in our wagons (may the Lord forgive me for lying!), and we had a hundred men who could use them. I also averred that we had other things of much greater powers than these, and when we visited his kraal we would exhibit them.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW WE DECEIVED THE KING—SOLVING A MATRIMONIAL PUZZLE—INSPAN AND MOVE SOUTH—OVERTAKEN.

THE king shook his head, and I gathered from his remarks that he preferred we should leave our magical appliances at home when we paid him a visit.

After this I led the conversation around to the object of his visit to the ladies' camp. He hesitated somewhat, and did not admit that he came for the purpose of marrying our fair friends, until I plumply asked if what we had heard was true. He then said that he did wish to marry them, and he would make them the greatest ladies of the land.

"But you should give them time to consider it," I said. "You must manage this matter just as it is managed in the country the ladies come from. Is it not so, my friend?"

He reluctantly assented to my proposition, and said that he would give them time to consider.

"Very well," I answered; "go away for a short time, say three or five days, and tell them that you will come back at the end of that period to receive their answer. You can, if you like, leave a few of your men here to watch the camp and see that they do not move away. This will make everything safe for you, and the ladies will have an opportunity to

think the matter over; when they have carefully considered it there is no doubt that they will do as you wish."

He hesitated a moment, and then said:

"The white man's words are wisdom; I will leave four of my soldiers here, and will come back in five days."

I called Mrs. Roberts and Miss Boland from their tent, not desiring to have the old blackguard go back there again, and heard him make his statement as just given, through the medium of the interpreter. I nodded to them, and they accepted the proposal at once.

Thereupon the interview ended; the king gathered his followers, detailing four of them to remain at the camp, and told them their duty would be to give him notice of any attempt of the party to move. He was then treated to a good-sized drink of weak brandy and water, and after smacking his lips over it for some ten minutes or so, he departed.

We watched his retiring column as it wound over the plain and off among the hills, and I am sure we all breathed sighs of satisfaction over the fact that we had secured his departure without bloodshed.

As Macatese and his train disappeared Mrs. Roberts invited us into the tent, and the five of us were quickly seated there.

"What shall we do now?" said Mrs. Roberts; and Miss Boland echoed, "What shall we do?"

"Are there any Kafirs among your people whom you can trust implicitly?"

"Yes, I think there are," replied Mrs. Roberts; "but we had better consult our manager on that point."

The manager was called and made one of the conference. In response to my inquiry he said there were several men in

their expedition in whom he had as much faith as he could possibly have in a negro.

"Well, what you want to do," I said, "is to get ready to move out of here immediately. But before you make the least preparation for doing so you must intoxicate those four men whom Macatese left; it must be no ordinary intoxication, either—something that will make them thoroughly and completely insensible. As soon as that is accomplished, get up your oxen, inspan, and start for the south. Macatese's dominions end at the Luranga; get across that river just as quick as you can, and then you'll be safe. Tie those men hand and foot, so that if one happens to sober up he can't get away; and don't let one of them leave you till you're safe on the opposite side of the stream."

Mrs. Roberts suggested that they had in their medicine-chest some tincture of opium, which might assist the intoxicating process.

"The very thing!" said Jack. "I was just going to propose to send you some from our camp, and I'm very glad you have it."

The opium was quickly brought, and also a bottle of brandy. Jack had studied medicine a little, and knew more of the use of drugs than either Harry or myself. He prepared what he averred would be a "knock-out" dose for the four men, and then gave it to the manager, with instructions to tell the Kafirs who were to administer it that they must not touch it themselves.

"I'm afraid they might be tempted to take a sip of it," he replied, "and I think I can manage it with my own hands."

He went outside the tent, got into an amiable conversa-

tion with the soldiers, and then invited them to take a drink. He poured out a glass for each of them in turn, and then pretended to take one himself. His pretense was one of the prettiest feats of legerdemain on record. In less than fifteen minutes the fellows were very sleepy and concluded they would take a nap. They were accommodated with a comfortable place, and then the work of inspanning and pulling out was pushed with great vigor.

There was no further need of our presence at the ladies' camp. While the process of subduing Macatese's men had been going on we told our friends that we should inspan at once and meet them on the south side of the river. To this end we hastened away to our own kraal as soon as the manager reported that the redoubtable four no longer possessed any powers of observation.

We rode home at full speed, and gave orders to the manager to inspan at once. We packed our rifles and ammunition so as to have them handy in case of trouble, and told the manager to get ready for fighting at a moment's notice. This alarmed him a good deal, and we quieted his fears by saying we did not expect any trouble, but had heard that the natives were quarrelsome and might come about us with hostile intentions.

There was a good moon in the early part of the night, and we told our friends before leaving them that we should trek until midnight at least. We advised them to do the same thing, and also spoke to their manager on the subject. He said he would trek until morning if necessary, but thought if they kept on the road till midnight it would be quite late enough.

We made the best speed we could through the country to the north of the Luranga, deeming it all-important that we should get that river between us and Macatese as soon as we could. We were fearful that some of his people might have lingered behind and witnessed the start of the ladies' expedition. Of course we had to take our chances on that point, but gathered courage from the fact that the four soldiers were left behind to give notice of any movement, and therefore there would be no necessity of any other watch upon the party.

The reader will remember about the hilly country through which we passed to the north of the Luranga, and the troubles we had in traversing it. Some natives who came into our camp offered to show us a much better route through that region than the one by which we came—a route, they said, which was not generally known. We stipulated to give each of them a string of beads and a cotton shirt, provided their statement proved true and the route was as represented, payment to be made on our arrival on the other bank of the river.

We kept up a constant communication with our friends, and as we proceeded our routes converged to bring us to the same point on the river. When we had completed our negotiation with these natives, I sent two of them with a note to Mrs. Roberts, telling her what the men had promised, and advising them to join us the next day. They joined us, and the whole party proceeded in company.

For once we found that the stories of the natives were not exaggerated; they guided us to a valley reaching from the level country to the bottom-land of the river—a valley

through which water flowed in the rainy season, or in times of great floods. It was narrow and crooked, but a vast improvement over the hilly route we traveled during our upward journey.

It was near sunset when we reached the Luranga, and our manager said that we had better outspan where we were and wait till morning for the crossing. I vehemently opposed the proposition, and told him we must cross that evening if it took all night to do it. We did not know what would happen, and wanted to be on the safe side of the stream.

With considerable reluctance the manager proceeded to carry out our orders, and the manager of the other party followed his example. The teams were doubled, as at the previous crossing, and one after the other the wagons were taken safely over. We had some personal mishaps, Jack and I getting a good soaking in the river, and Mrs. Roberts faring likewise, in consequence of her horse deciding to lie down and roll when in the middle of the stream. The forward axle of one of our wagons was badly cracked and strained during the crossing, so that a new axle was needed before we could proceed on our journey.

It was long after midnight before we three fellows were able to get to bed. We fell into a sound sleep, and were roused at daybreak by the manager, who said there were a large number of natives on the other side of the stream, shouting and gesticulating violently! Of course we rose at once and dressed in a hurry.

Sure enough, we could see on the other side of the Luranga a party of African warriors to the number of a hundred and more. We went down to the southern bank to

parley with them, and you may be sure we took our Winchester's and plenty of ammunition. We also took our fore-looper along to act as interpreter, and after a good deal of parleying and promises of safety we induced two of their number to cross the river, so that we could talk to them. The king was not with the party, and we were not at all sorry that he stayed at home.

The two men who came over the river belonged to his personal staff or ministry, and were rather more intelligent than the average of the tribe. They told us we had been gone two days before the king discovered our departure, and he was greatly puzzled to know why the faithful soldiers whom he had left with us had not informed him; he had not heard from them at all; was very angry at their conduct, and very angry with the ladies and ourselves for leaving his dominions so abruptly.

I explained, through the fore-looper, that the soldiers whom the king left to watch over the ladies' kraal were not in any wise to blame; they had done their duty as far as they could, but we had enchanted them by our magic powers and made it impossible for them to know that the camp had been changed, or anything else. I asserted that we had kept them under that spell of enchantment during our journey to the Luranga, but now that we were safe on the southern bank we should exercise our powers of witchcraft and remove the spell. I promised that the men should join them during the day, but only on condition that the party of warriors then on the north bank should remain where they were.

"If one of you men," said I, "attempts to cross the river we shall exercise the power of our magic guns, and he will

be a dead man before he knows it. Our guns are ready, and should we desire to do so we can shoot away the ground on which your people are standing, and leave beneath them a bottomless pit, into which they will fall!"

The fore-looper delivered my words very solemnly, and the envoys were duly impressed with the truth of all I said. They promised that their men should remain exactly where they were until the soldiers who had acted as our escort should be returned to them; then they would go back to their king with any message we desired to send.

I answered that they might as well take the message on the spot, which was, that the ladies could not possibly decide in so short a time as the king allowed them the question as to whether they would be his brides or not. Consequently they had thought it well to leave Macatese's dominions and come to a region where they could deliberate freely and with plenty of time at their command. If they concluded to accept his proposition they would send him a message to that effect as soon as their determination was reached; unless he heard from them he might consider that his proposals were declined.

The envoys repeated the message several times to make sure that they had it correctly; then they recrossed the river, and we saw them no more, except at a distance.

During the course of the day the soldiers whom Macatese had left as a guard were sufficiently sobered up to be sent to their comrades. They had been treated kindly, and also treated often, the manager of the ladies' expedition keeping them well filled with brandy containing a proper proportion of opium, Mrs. Roberts taking great care that the quantity

administered to them should not be sufficient to endanger their lives. From the time they were first put to sleep they remained in a stupefied condition, and were carried in the top of the wagon, their hands and feet securely tied, and a guard standing over them, so that escape was impossible.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE LAST HUNT—THREE PROPOSALS—"STILL WATERS RUN DEEP"—THE END.

As we neared the river their doses of brandy and opium were considerably reduced, so that by the time we had crossed the Luranga they were fairly sobered up. They had been supplied with all they wanted to eat, which was not a great deal; but as they got the opium out of their systems their appetites returned, and before their departure they had an abundant meal of stewed meat and steaks, cooked over the fire. We loaded them with presents—that is, we gave each of them a cotton shirt, three yards of cloth, and two strings of beads—so that they went back to the north side of the river feeling very proud, happy, and rich, though possibly they may have had some misgivings as to the reception which awaited them on their arrival at the king's kraal. The king had a pleasant habit of beheading or strangling those of his people who displeased him, and it was on this account that I impressed the envoys with the idea that the whole affair was due to the white man's magic, and the innocent soldiers were not in the least to blame.

Shortly after the soldiers joined their comrades on the north bank the whole party marched away into the country back of the river and disappeared among the hills. We were

fearful that they might attempt a raid upon us during the night, and so, about sunset, we inspanned again and traveled by moonlight until a late hour, a new axle having been made to replace the broken one. We felt sure that the fellows would not proceed far into the region where they did not belong, lest they might encounter some of the soldiers of the king who owned the land, and in that event there would be sure to be a fight.

We trekked on again the next night, and then went into kraal about half a mile from a water-hole, which was the drinking-place of a large number of elephants, buffaloes, elands, and other animals, not to omit lions and leopards. We found a small spring of water close to where we outspanned, sufficient for the use of our party, including the oxen and horses, but not large enough to be a favorite spot with the wild animals when a much greater one was close at hand.

Here we determined to abide for a while, to give our teams a chance to rest after their forced march, and also to do some hunting that would finish the burdens of our wagons. In these up-country excursions the hunter loads his wagons with provisions and trade goods, and as the provisions and goods are used up he fills the space with hides, ivory, karosses, and other things that are marketable in the seaports of the Cape. When his cargo is completed he is ready to return home. By means of the contents of his wagons he pays the expenses of his expedition, and sometimes realizes a handsome profit.

We had some fine hunting in that region, including night-shooting at the drinking-place already mentioned. Our sport

was hardly equal to that which Cumming describes in his book, but we had splendid success, take it for all in all, and were well satisfied with it. The asperities of night-shooting were softened on several occasions by the presence of Mrs. Roberts and Miss Boland, who wished to enjoy the sport, and achieved their full share of success in so doing.

We had our wagons pretty nearly filled up, and only a few more hides and tusks were needed to complete the lading. As for the ladies' wagon, it was little more than half filled, and their collection of ivory was considerably smaller than ours. We said nothing about this to our friends, as we all were reluctant to dwell intently on the subject of separation.

One day I was out with Miss Boland in search of elands, giraffes, or any other medium-sized game that came in our way. We were not equipped for elephants or buffaloes, and, as usually happens in such cases, we saw both kinds of animals in goodly numbers. When we saw the elephants Miss Boland said:

"I suppose you'll be riding back to camp now to get your elephant-gun and ammunition?"

"No," I answered, "my enthusiasm for elephants is less than it was."

"Well," she responded, "so is mine. I'm thinking I have had all the elephant and buffalo shooting I care for, and Mrs. Roberts shares my opinion."

"Do you intend to remain much longer in this region?" I asked.

"I think not," was the answer; "I was talking the matter over with Mrs. Roberts last evening, and we are pretty well

agreed that when you gentlemen leave us we will start for Walvisch Bay."

I explained that the time of separation was approaching; that our wagons were nearly filled with the articles that a hunter usually brings back from the chase, and in a day or two we would probably inspan and start for Durban.

"Our roads diverge from this point," said Miss Boland, with a sigh.

"Yes, that is true," I replied; "Durban and Walvisch Bay are on opposite sides of South Africa. But the roads may come together again."

"I don't think I understand you quite, Mr. Manson," replied Miss Boland, with a blush rising on her cheek, browned though it was by the sun of Africa.

"I will make my meaning clear in a few words: we have become pretty well acquainted during our sojourn, and I have no hesitation in asking you, Miss Boland, to become my wife. Will you do so?"

If we had been on foot the reader would be justified in surmising that we fell into each other's arms after the usual manner of lovers when one of the most important questions of life is asked; but as we were on horseback in the open plain the scene was varied—our horses edged closely to each other, we clasped our right hands, leaned over in our saddles and exchanged a kiss, and after the kiss was exchanged Miss Boland uttered the single word "Yes."

For some minutes we rode on in silence, our hearts too full for utterance; by and by I spoke, and then the lady responded, and in a little while we were chatting away about as before. We paid very little attention to the game that

day, and came back to camp absolutely empty-handed, although we knew there was a short supply of meat for feeding our multitude. The rest of the party rallied us somewhat on our ill success, which I attributed to the shyness of the game, it having been hunted so long, and I added that we would have to pull out of that place within a day or so at the latest.

I should explain that in our homeward ride after the proposal and acceptance it was arranged that Miss Boland would proceed with Mrs. Roberts to Walvisch Bay, and after settling their affairs there she would take the first steamer for Cape Town. I would go with Harry and Jack to Durban, and when all our matters in that place were adjusted I would take the first steamer on that side of the peninsula for Cape Town. There we would meet again, in a city where marriage licenses are easily obtained and clergymen are numerous and fond of earning fees.

My remark about the necessity of moving out from where we were encamped precipitated matters; Jack sought and obtained an opportunity to see Miss Boland alone. I think they took a stroll in the direction of the spring that supplied us with water, under the pretense that they wanted a draft, or at least Jack did, fresh from the ground. Before they returned from the spring Jack had asked Miss Boland to become his wife, to which she had replied that her heart was already pledged to another.

"Not to Harry, is it?" in a tone that evinced considerable anger and jealousy.

"Oh no, not at all," was the reply; "he has never spoken to me on the subject."

"Then it's some fellow back in merry England, I sup-

pose?" Jack retorted. "I don't care who it is, as long as it isn't Harry. But as long as I live," he continued, "you will always have my best wishes, Miss Boland, and my warmest hopes for your happiness."

The young woman expressed herself in similar terms toward her would-be lover, and then changed the subject of conversation, which was broken up altogether when they reached the camp again.

Harry happened to be inside the tent cleaning his rifle during this episode at the spring, and consequently knew nothing about it. After supper, which we took all together under the improvised tent where we held our first luncheon, we chatted awhile about the necessity of breaking up and going in different directions, regretting unanimously the inevitableness of the movement. When we adjourned and escorted the ladies to their tent Harry managed to draw Miss Boland aside, unperceived by either Jack or myself. He went through pretty nearly the same formula as that of the walk to the spring, receiving the same answer that had been given to Jack. He was a good deal crestfallen to find that Miss Boland's heart and hand were already pledged, and fell into the same supposition that her fiancé was somebody in the old country. His satisfaction at this belief was similar to that of Jack, and it would have been cruel to undeceive him, as well as awkward.

It is not often that a young woman has three proposals inside of six hours from three different individuals, and all three good men and true.

We agreed to have another day's hunting and then inspan and trek away, each party in its own direction. Happily for

us, a large herd of elands put in its appearance early in the day, and we went in pursuit of them. There were so many of us on horseback that we managed to surround the herd and drive it into a hollow, of whose existence we knew, where a precipitous wall on three sides of an area of a few acres caught the creatures as in a trap. We could have killed the entire herd without difficulty, but we were merciful, and only shot enough to give us a good supply of meat.

True to our agreement, we all inspanned on the following morning and trekked away, the ladies going to the southwest, we to the southeast. We breakfasted together, and the last bottle of champagne was used in drinking health and a safe journey, together with all sorts of good wishes to each and every one of the party. Tears were in all our eyes as we separated, but there were fewer in Harry's than in those of any of the rest.

The ladies' wagon was ready sooner than were our own wagons, and they pulled out in advance of us. We fired a farewell volley as they departed, and they fired one in return.

"I wonder if we'll ever meet again?" said Harry, with a sigh, as he watched the retreating forms of the two ladies on horseback.

"Perhaps so," said Jack, in a tone of confidence; "the world is small, and the paths of humanity constantly cross each other."

"Yes," I answered, in consonance with Jack, "the world is very small, and the more I live the more I comprehend the correctness of the assertion. Of course life has many chances, but I confidently believe that we have not separated from our friends for all time."

We met with no mishap of consequence during our homeward journey, though we lost several of our oxen and my favorite horse, Brickdust, by the depredations of the lions. We were able to kill enough game to keep the company fairly supplied with provisions, but as we neared the settlements of the Boer farmers we found the game growing very scarce.

By the way, I must not fail to tell of an adventure which befell Harry during this journey. It was after we reached the settlements, and when game was scarce, that Harry pursued a quagga for quite a distance. Night overtook him, and he was not in sight of camp; he knew its general direction, and was riding for it, listening intently for the sound of the signal-guns that we always fired when one was out after dark. He was feeling rather gloomy at having lost his game, and was thinking of the possibilities of being obliged to camp out alone in the open air.

Suddenly his horse snorted, and indicated that there was something ahead. Harry urged him gently forward, and in the little light that remained he made out the forms of two quagga, that seemed to be standing entirely unalarmed in the presence of danger. To make sure work Harry dismounted, and by the quick use of his rifle he brought down both the animals. Then, clinging to his bridle, he went cautiously in the direction of his prizes to examine them. To his horror he discovered that they were horses; one of them was wearing a halter, and the other was fully harnessed. He had been shooting a Dutchman's wagon-team!

At the Tugela River we found such a flood that we were obliged to wait two days for it to subside. Then we went

on, and one day, about noon, rolled into Durban with the air of conquering heroes. We sold our hides, ivory, and other things to good advantage, and recouped ourselves fully for our outlay. With our horses and oxen we were less fortunate; it is always the case, the world over, when you want to buy live-stock, nobody wants to sell, and when you want to sell nobody wants to buy, except at an enormous discount. You have the alternative of accepting half the value or of keeping the animals and seeing them perform that wonderful scientific feat of eating their heads off. We chose the former method and sold our stock at auction in the public square of Durban.

After everything had been cleaned up and our settlements made, I inquired for the first steamer that would leave for the Cape. Jack said he thought he would take a run down there, and he was glad that I intended going. Harry was not inclined to make the journey, and said he would stay awhile in Durban and then join another party going up-country. "I'll wait for you fellows," said he, "if you'll cut your Cape visit short, and come back in a reasonable time."

"I don't think I shall be back this way in a hurry," remarked Jack. "The fact is, boys—I don't mind telling it to you now—I'm engaged to Mrs. Roberts! We are to meet at the Cape and be married there."

"The deuce you say!" Harry remarked.

"Yes, actually so; I proposed to her the morning we broke camp, and she accepted!"

There was a pause, which I broke by saying, "Jack and I can be 'best men' for each other, as I'm engaged to Miss Boland, and am to meet her for marriage at the Cape!"

Harry and Jack both gave prolonged whistles as I finished my little story, and after his whistle Harry remarked, "I thought from what she said she was engaged to a fellow in England!"

"So did I," said Jack; "and this quiet, inoffensive, demure old Manson has cut us both out!"

"That he has!" said Harry. "'Still waters run deep!'"

THE END.

JAN 21 1919

